

Swimming and Diving Rules Interpretations - 2019-20

By NFHS on August 14, 2019 [swimming & diving](#)

Publisher's Note: The National Federation of State High School Associations is the only source of official high school interpretations. They do not set aside nor modify any rule. They are made and published by the NFHS in response to situations presented. Dr. Karissa L. Niehoff, Publisher, NFHS Publications © 2019

CORRECTION: (Underlining shows additions; ~~striketrough~~ shows deletions.)

3.6.1 SITUATION A: While waiting behind the starting platform for a race to begin, a competitor taunts an opponent on the basis of relative ability. **RULING:** The competitor is disqualified from that event and from further competition and is also removed from events in which he/she previously qualified ~~or had previously scored points~~.

8.3.5 SITUATION B: The second swimmer on Team A's 400 freestyle relay completes her leg of the relay but instead of touching the pad or end wall, she finishes in the recessed gutter area above the touchpad without contacting the pool structure at the finish end. The swimmer breaks the vertical plane of the end wall but has no legal touch when the next swimmer leaves the block. **RULING:** ~~Legal~~ Illegal exchange. **COMMENT:** Rule 8-3-5 requires the swimmers to contact the finish end in accordance with the finish rules applicable to each stroke.

SITUATION 1: The referee instructs timers to stop their watches/push their back-up buttons when the swimmer, at the end of the race, touches (a) the touchpad, (b) the front of the starting platform, (c) the wall between the touchpad and the lane line, (d) the back wall of the gutter. **RULING:** Correct procedure in all cases. **COMMENT:** The finish rules require the swimmer to touch some part of the pool structure at the finish end of the pool in order to have completed the race. This is defined as the vertical portion of the pool, contiguous surfaces of the deck and overflow gutter, the front portion of the starting block or platform, or the touchpad at the end of the course.

SITUATION 2: The referee instructs timers to stop their watches/push their back-up buttons when the swimmer, at the end of the race, touches (a) the open space of the gutter, (b) when some part of the swimmer crosses the vertical plane contiguous to the vertical end wall, (c) the wall above the gutter. **RULING:** In (a) and (b), incorrect procedure. In (c), correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The finish rules require the swimmer to touch some part of the pool structure at the finish end of the pool in order to have completed the race. This is defined as the vertical portion of the pool, contiguous surfaces of the deck and overflow gutter, the front portion of the starting block or platform, or the touchpad at the end of the course.

SITUATION 3: At the finish of the backstroke event, Swimmer A initially contacts the end wall above the gutter and subsequently contacts the touchpad with his shoulder. The result is a touchpad time of 57.62 and a button/watch time of 57.41. The qualifying time for section championships is 57.50. The referee declares the official

result for Swimmer A as the touchpad time; the coach insists that the official time should be the backup time, since the swimmer legally finished the race upon initial contact with the end wall. **RULING:** The backup time is the official result for Swimmer A, and that time is also used to establish the order of finish for the event. **COMMENT:** There is no longer any basis in the rules for the referee to select the touchpad time over the backup time, since a legal finish does not require contact with the touchpad nor use of that result as the primary outcome. (6-3-2, 8-2-1g)

SITUATION 4: In the medley relay, the backstroke swimmer contacts the starting block, but not the touchpad, at the end of his/her leg of the relay. The breaststroke swimmer leaves the platform when the backstroke swimmer makes contact with the block but before that swimmer contacts the touchpad. An exchange violation is declared for an early take-off by the breaststroke swimmer. **RULING:** Improper decision. **COMMENT:** A legal backstroke finish is accomplished by touching any part of the pool structure, including starting block, at the end wall. It is no longer necessary to touch the touchpad. Once the previous swimmer has legally finished his/her leg of the relay, the subsequent swimmer may legally relinquish contact with the starting platform.

SITUATION 5: A competitor in a dual meet reports to the blocks for race. It is obvious to the referee that the manufacturer's logo exceeds the acceptable standards. **RULING:** The official asks the swimmer to step back, as there is no way he can fix the suit problem without delaying the heat. **COMMENT:** Correct procedure. After the race the official should discuss the disqualification with either the coach or the competitor. While NFHS rules do not require the official to notify the coach in matters of information on the suit, the official could – and perhaps should – so the coach can join the educational team process.

SITUATION 6: The referee notices a diver is wearing a suit that is not covering the buttocks. The referee notifies the coach of the competitor to make the suit legal before the diver can participate in the event. The competitor cannot make her suit legal without delaying the meet. **RULING:** The referee declares a failed dive. **COMMENT:** If the diver is able to correct the suit issue before her next scheduled dive, then she may perform that dive and continue competing, with the one failed dive in the books. However, if she cannot make the correction before the next dive, then it would be a second failed dive and she would be disqualified from the event.