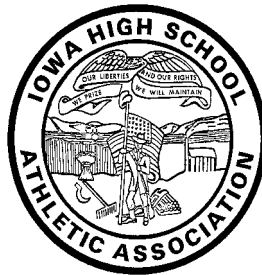


SWIMMING OFFICIALS MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

This manual is provided to improve the consistency of officiating across the State of Iowa and is based on the premise that a swimming official's purpose at a meet is to ensure fair competition for all participants. In order to accomplish this, officials must enforce all rules without regard for the outcome of the meet. This manual is not meant to be another "rule book," but to help improve the mechanics of all officials. It should be especially useful for new and less experienced officials.

Thank you to the veteran officials and coaches who reviewed the information contained in this publication. Their candid responses are very much appreciated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NFHS Officials' Code of Ethics	1-2
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SWIMMING COMPETITION

Key Points for All Officials	3-5
The Swimming Referee	6-9
The Starter	10-12
All Swimming Officials	13-15
The Swimming Announcer	16-17
Timing Equipment Operator & Computer Operator ...	18
Lane Timers	19-20
Handling Blood	21-22

NATIONAL FEDERATION OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS

Officials at interscholastic athletic events are participants in the educational development of high school students. As such, they must exercise a high level of self-discipline, independence and responsibility. The purpose of this Code is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all interscholastic officials.

Officials shall master both the rules of the contest and the mechanics necessary to enforce the rules, and shall exercise authority in an impartial, firm and controlled manner.

Officials shall work with each other and their state associations in a constructive and cooperative manner.

Officials shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession in all interaction with student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, school administrators, colleagues, and the public.

Officials shall prepare themselves both physically and mentally, shall dress neatly and appropriately, and shall comport themselves in a manner consistent with the high standards of the profession.

Officials shall be punctual and professional in the fulfillment of all contractual obligations.

Officials shall remain mindful that their conduct influences the respect that student-athletes, coaches and the public

hold for the profession.

Officials shall, while enforcing the rules of competition, remain aware of the inherent risk of injury that competition poses to student-athletes. Where appropriate, they shall inform event management of conditions or situations that appear unreasonably hazardous.

Officials shall take reasonable steps to educate themselves in the recognition of emergency conditions that might arise during the course of competition.

KEY POINTS FOR ALL HIGH SCHOOL SWIMMING OFFICIALS

All swimming officials should:

Be knowledgeable and professional.

Study the NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules Book, including the situations and rulings, and **attend rules' meetings** to stay informed regarding current rules.

Be consistent in the application of the rules, at all times and **at all levels of competition.**

Enforce all rules equitably and fairly. (Do not allow rule infractions to go uncalled simply because no one has gained an advantage. Do not try to decide who might be unfairly affected by a violation. If there is a violation, it must be called.)

Exercise fair and unbiased judgement by disregarding an athlete's identity, team affiliation, etc.

Make timely and decisive decisions.

Call only those violations which you specifically observe. (Do not guess or anticipate. Be prepared to explain the "who," "what" and "when" of the violation, as well as, where were you positioned to see the violation.)

Give your undivided attention to your assignment.

Avoid coaching athletes, but a reminder as to legal starting position prior to the start of a race may be acceptable. At lower levels of competition, specifically junior high, the explanation of legal starting position may be much more lengthy than at higher levels of competition.

Explain the rule and the violation to competitors and/or coaches when requested to do so. (Do not give advice to competitors or coaches on rule violations. At lower levels of competition, specifically junior high, the explanation of the rule and violation may be much more lengthy than at higher levels of competition.)

Wait until the meet is over to discuss circumstances surrounding events which occurred during the meet, unless it is part of the explanation of the rule and violation.

Give the benefit of the doubt to the competitor. (Close calls do not count. Do not discuss close calls with coaches or competitors. A close call is a no call!)

Never express disagreement with the Referee's decision to a coach, athlete or spectator.

Mentor less experienced officials, as long as it is not a distraction during a meet.

Admit when mistakes have been made and correct the mistake according to the rules.

Be friendly, but do not fraternize with competitors, coaches, or spectators during the meet.

Be professional in dress and behavior.

Maintain control of the meet, but remember all participants want to do their best while having a fun, enjoyable experience.

THE SWIMMING REFEREE

The Referee is the head official at all levels of competition. The Referee shall supervise other officials, have full authority over other officials and the meet, and may overrule another official's call. The Referee's decision is final.

Before the meet, the Referee should arrive at least 30-minutes prior to the start of the meet, paying particular attention to the following:

- The physical layout of the pool and deck area for any safety or rule concerns.
- The water level and water depth at the starting end.
- The starting block height and stability of the blocks.
- The location and adequacy of the backstroke flags and 15 meter markings.
- The starting and timing systems, including touch pads centered in the lanes, recall device and backup timing procedure.

The Referee should also:

- Meet with the other officials, if applicable, to discuss dual confirmation on relay take-offs, responsibilities for turns, strokes and during distance events.

- Meet with coaches and captains of all teams to discuss entry procedure, starting time, lane assignments, number of heats, scoring, use of lap counters, backup timing system, sportsmanship, jewelry/logo rule, length of break and warmup after the 50-yard freestyle and any special concerns.
- Meet with the timers to give instructions regarding responsibilities, positioning, timing and recording times. It may be wise to emphasize to the timers that they are meet officials, and as such they should be unbiased.
- Discuss meet procedures with the announcer. This discussion should include warm-ups, announcing heats and lanes, and when to announce results and scores. It may also be wise to have the announcer make a few announcements regarding the use of flash cameras, cell phones or pagers.
- Meet with the person(s) who will be dropping the recall rope, if used, to be sure they understand their responsibilities.

During the meet, the Referee should:

- Prior to each heat, check that each swimmer is ready to swim in the proper lane and do not let swimmers step onto the blocks until they are directed to do so. Inform the starter when it is time for the starting commands to begin, if applicable.

- Use these suggested instructions before turning the race over to the starter:
 - “Quiet for the start please,”
 - Announce the event, “Varsity 200-yard medley relay,”
 - “Timers, clear your watches,”
 - (For the 500-yard freestyle only), “A sounding device will be used when the lead swimmer has two lengths plus 8-yards to swim,”
 - “Step up/into the water feet first,”
 - “Mr. / Madame Starter.”

- Be in position, and carry a sounding device to recall the start, if necessary, and notify competitors of any starting infractions.

- Determine disqualifications and promptly notify competitors and/or their coaches of infractions and resulting disqualifications.

- Determine when it is appropriate to integrate back up times.

- Resolve any disagreement in a race in a timely manner.

- Keep the meet progressing without unnecessary delays.

- Work with the computer operator and coaches, especially after each relay, to ensure there are no individual entry limitation violations.

- Prohibit the use of bells, sirens, horns or other noise makers during the meet. *(This may include cell phones which could affect the start of a race.)*
- Record the order of finish for each heat and keep a record of disqualifications.

After the meet, the Referee should:

- Check the scorer's calculations to ensure an accurate final score. On the official score sheet, record the time the meet was completed and sign the official score sheet. This is the official score unless a clerical error is discovered within 48 hours.

THE STARTER

The starter has the responsibility to ensure a fair start for all swimmers. Be aware of circumstances that may interfere with a fair start. Some of these might include: excessive cheering by spectators or team personnel, cell phones, equipment problems and conflicts between people on deck.

Before the meet, the starter should arrive early enough to:

- Check the starting and recall equipment and become familiar with that equipment.
- Be sure the volume of the sound system is adequate so all swimmers can easily hear the starting commands.
- Check the position of the strobe light to ensure it can be seen by all swimmers on the blocks, as well as the back up timers.

During the meet, the starter should:

- Have an unobstructed view of the swimmers on the blocks and should be located within 10 feet of the starting end of the pool.
- Speak slowly and clearly and give the starting commands in a conversational tone.
- Use these suggested instructions when starting a race using the forward start:

- Announce the event, “Varsity 200-yard medley relay,”
- “Take your mark,”
- For the backstroke start, it is permissible to give the command, “Place your feet,” before giving the command, “Take your mark.”
- Use these suggested instructions when starting a race using the backstroke start:
 - “Place your feet,”
 - Announce the event, “Varsity 100-yard backstroke,”
 - “Take your mark,”
- When all swimmers are in legal starting position, and motionless, give the signal to start the race. Hold swimmers only long enough to ensure a fair start.
- Have the swimmers stand up, or stand down for the backstroke or medley relay, if a fair start seems difficult to achieve after giving the “Take Your Mark,” command. Give any reminders that may be needed to ensure a fair start and repeat the starting sequence.
- Order the recall rope dropped, or recall device activated, as soon as the signal is given for a recall. When a referee and starter are present, confer with the referee to confirm all false starts.
- If using the horn, or other sounding device, for the recall, be sure all swimmers have surfaced before

discontinuing the sounding device so swimmers can hear the recall.

- Discharge a sounding device when the lead swimmer in the 500-yard freestyle has two lengths plus 5 yards remaining in the race.
- Record the unofficial order of finish for each heat.

ALL SWIMMING OFFICIALS

In all meets, signal a stroke, kick, body position, turn, or finish violation by raising one hand overhead with an open palm, immediately upon discovering a violation. The official should continue to give the signal until the referee has had an adequate amount of time to see it. Immediately following the race any violations should be reported to the referee.

Stroke Inspectors should:

- Observe swimmers in your jurisdiction only.
- Examine the swimming strokes from end wall to end wall. Signal any observed violations and report them to the referee immediately following the race.
- Be in position to see the heads of the swimmers break the surface of the water at, or before, the 15-meter mark.
- Walk at a pace that keeps you abreast or slightly behind the swimmers. As the field spreads out during the race stay slightly behind the lead swimmers, but do not lose sight of the trailing swimmers.

Turn Judges:

- Observe swimmers in your jurisdiction only.
- Be in position (preferably in line with the end wall)

to observe the last stroke prior to the turn, the turn, and the first full stroke after the turn. Signal any observed violations and report them to the referee immediately following the race.

Relay Take-off Judges:

- Observe swimmers in your jurisdiction only.
- Be in position (preferably within 8-10 feet of the end wall) to observe feet first on the takeoff of the departing swimmer, then the touch of the incoming swimmer's hand.

In meets where dual confirmation is NOT used, signal a relay takeoff violation by raising one hand overhead with an open palm, immediately upon discovering a violation. The official should continue to give the signal until the referee, if more than one official is present, has an adequate amount of time to see it. Immediately following the race any violations should be reported to the referee, if present.

In meets where dual confirmation IS used, the official records the number of the swimmer committing the relay takeoff violation and the lane in which it occurred. The signal for a relay takeoff violation should not be given until the last swimmer in the heat is in the water. The official should continue to give the signal until the referee has had an adequate amount of time to see it. Immediately following the race any violations should be reported to the referee.

- The use of a “relay take-off slip/card” is not required, but may help one stay focused throughout the meet. These slips/cards also provide verification of dual confirmation.

SWIMMING ANNOUNCER

The announcer helps control the flow of the meet, keeps the meet moving on schedule, and informs swimmers, coaches and spectators as the status of the meet. The announcer should be knowledgeable in all aspects of swimming. To enhance interest in the meet, it is important for the announcer to be aware of possible record setting performances and to announce those performances.

Before the meet, the announcer should:

- Become familiar with the PA system make sure the volume is adequate.
- Discuss with the referee the meet schedule including warm-ups, start time and scheduled breaks.
- Discuss with meet management the schedule for team introductions, National Anthem, announcements concerning concessions, etc.

During the meet, the announcer should:

- Announce each event in the manner prescribed by the referee. If possible, introduce the swimmers before each heat.
- Remind spectators to turn off, or silence, pagers and cell phones to ensure a fair start for all swimmers. Remind spectators to refrain from using flash cameras at the start of a race and during the

turns.

- Be aware of where the referee is at all times in the event he, or she, needs your attention.
- Be aware of possible record setting performances and announce those performances.
- Announce the results of each event, including disqualifications.
- Make appropriate announcements to assist competitors, coaches and spectators know the progress of the meet.
- Announce awards procedures, if applicable.
- Announce the final score.
- Make other announcements, such as location of the concession area, results of other contests of local interest (i.e., football, basketball, wrestling, etc.) only when those announcements will not interrupt the flow of the meet or be a distraction to the competitors. Such announcements should be cleared with the referee prior to the meet.

TIMING EQUIPMENT OPERATOR

The timing equipment operator is responsible for all timing equipment, including the scoreboard. The timing equipment operator reports to the referee, or his/her designee.

Ideally, the timing equipment should be located on the referee's side of the pool and in such a way that the operator is able to view all turns and finishes.

The timing equipment operator should:

- Ensure all timing equipment starts properly & registers all turns and finishes.
- Report to the referee any discrepancies of .3 (three-tenths), or more, of a second between the pad times and back up times.

COMPUTER OPERATOR

The computer operator reports to the referee. He or she is responsible for seeding the meet, if necessary, and producing event or heat sheets for each race. The computer operator should assist the referee in determining if individual entry limitations have been violated. The computer operator is also responsible for scoring the meet and producing result sheets, which include final team scores, at the end of the meet.

LANE TIMERS

Lane timers should:

- Become familiar with the stop watch and backup button being used. Know whether the backup button is pushed only at the end of the race or at the beginning and end of the race.
- Not cheer for swimmers during a race, as timers are considered meet officials.
- Use the index finger on the dominant hand to start and stop the watch or backup button. If operating both the watch and the backup button, use the index finger of the dominant hand to activate and stop the backup watch and the index finger on the non-dominant hand to stop, or activate and stop, the backup button. Push the buttons with as little hand or arm movement as possible.
- Stand at the end of your lane and watch the starter's console at the start of each heat. Start the watch at sight of the strobe light. If no strobe is available, activate the watch at the sound of the horn. Do not remain at the end of the pool during a race, except for the 50-yard freestyle.
- Start their watch even if no swimmer is in their lane so it can be used if another watch does not start.
- Notify the head timer in their lane, if their watch does not start.

- Be in position, looking over the edge of the pool, at the end of their lane to observe the finish of the race.
- Record all times to the nearest one-hundredth of a second (.01).
- Notify the head timer in their lane, if their watch is .3 (three-tenths), or more, of a second slower or faster than the time on the display board.
- Do not clear your watch until the time has been recorded, or until you have been directed to do so by the referee or head timer.

REVIEW OF BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGEN PROCEDURES

Host schools are expected to:

- ***Designate someone to properly handle situations involving blood and other body fluids which contaminate any part of the facilities being used.*** The facilities include pool area, locker room area, and any other areas being used by participants or spectators.
- ***Have available the necessary disposable supplies for cleaning the facilities without delay.*** These supplies should include disinfectant, protective gloves, and containers labeled for hazardous waste disposal.

Participating schools are expected to:

- ***Handle the cleaning of blood and other body fluids from their own athletes,*** to have the necessary supplies available and to ***use universal precautions*** when doing so.

Officials are expected to:

- ***Stop the contest as per the contest rules when blood or bloody body fluids are present.***
- ***Officials shall not be involved in cleaning blood*** from the facilities or athletes. Officials shall **NOT** handle blood and other body fluids, ***except in cases***

where emergency first-aid is needed and the official is the most qualified person to provide that first-aid, i.e., EMT's, athletic trainers, physicians, etc.

