

### 2025-26 Swimming and Diving Rules Meeting



Tyler Lown, IHSAA  
Jason Eslinger, IGHSAU



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### MANDATORY CONCUSSION COURSE FOR ALL 7-12 COACHES



- ALL 7-12 coaches (paid or volunteer) are required to view the NFHS course, "Concussion in Sports" before the beginning of their respective sport season. Information regarding accessing this course has been sent to your school administrator.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### CONCUSSIONS



*Iowa Code Section 280.13C* states, in part,

- "Annually, each school district and nonpublic school shall provide to the parent or guardian of each student a concussion and brain information sheet, as provided by the Iowa High School Athletic Association and Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union.
- The student and student's parent or guardian shall sign and return the concussion and brain injury information sheet to the student's school prior to the student's participation in any interscholastic activity for grades seven through twelve."



---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

**CONCUSSION RECOGNITION & MANAGEMENT**



**CONCUSSION RECOGNITION AND MANAGEMENT**

**HEADS UP: Concussions in High School Sports**

1. Introduction

2. Concussion Recognition

3. Concussion Management


4. Return to Play

5. Concussion Prevention

6. Concussion Research

7. Concussion Resources

8. Concussion Summary




---

---

---

---


---


---

---


---

**CONCUSSION RECOGNITION & MANAGEMENT**





- Additional information on concussions can be found at [www.ihsaa.org](http://www.ihsaa.org). Click on "Information on Sports Concussions" on the IHSAA home page.




---

---

---

---


---

---


---

---

**CONCUSSIONS**



- **Coach Removal** – Iowa law requires a student's coach who observes signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion or brain injury, during any kind of participation, i.e. practices, scrimmages, contests, etc., to remove the student from participation immediately and the student shall not return until the coach, or school's designated representative, receives written clearance to return from a licensed health care provider.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## CONCUSSIONS



- **Contest Official Removal** – Iowa law requires a contest official who observes signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or brain injury during scrimmages, contests, etc., to remove the student from participation immediately and that official, or a designated contest official at the contest/event, must receive the written clearance to return from a licensed health care provider before the student can return to participation in that contest/event, including an event that takes place over multiple days.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL



- **Step 1-** Athlete has received written medical clearance from a licensed health care provider to begin the return-to-play process, AND the athlete is back to regular activities, including school, without experiencing any concussion signs, symptoms, or behaviors for a minimum of 24 hours.
- **Step 2-** Low impact, light aerobic exercise. Walking or stationary cycling at slow to medium pace. No resistance/weight training.
- **Step 3-** Basic exercise, such as running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.
- **Step 4-** Non contact, sport-specific training drills (dribbling, ball handling, batting, fielding, running drills) in full equipment. Resistance/weight training may begin.
- **Step 5-** Full contact practice and participation in normal training activities.
- **Step 6-** Contest participation




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL



Return to Play Protocol - Concussion	
Step	Description
1	Medical clearance from a licensed health care provider to begin the return-to-play process, AND the athlete is back to regular activities, including school, without experiencing any concussion signs, symptoms, or behaviors for a minimum of 24 hours.
2	Low impact, light aerobic exercise. Walking or stationary cycling at slow to medium pace. No resistance/weight training.
3	Basic exercise, such as running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.
4	Non contact, sport-specific training drills (dribbling, ball handling, batting, fielding, running drills) in full equipment. Resistance/weight training may begin.
5	Full contact practice and participation in normal training activities.
6	Contest participation




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## RETURN TO LEARN PROTOCOL- HOUSE FILE 2442



- Personnel of a school district or accredited non-public school with enrolled students who participate in an extracurricular interscholastic activity which is a contest in grades seven through twelve shall develop a return-to-learn plan based on guidance developed by the Brain Injury Association of America in cooperation with a student removed from participation in an extracurricular interscholastic activity and diagnosed with a concussion or brain injury, the student's parent or guardian, and the student's licensed health care provider to accommodate the student as the student returns to the classroom.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## SCHOOL CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL - EXAMPLE



**Management of Concussion Injuries**

For the purpose of this protocol, a concussion is defined as a traumatic brain injury (TBI) that results in a change in mental status or consciousness. Concussions can be caused by a direct blow to the head or by a sudden acceleration or deceleration of the head. Concussions can also be caused by a blow to the neck or by a sudden change in direction of the head.

Concussions are a leading cause of injury in school sports. The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance to school personnel on how to manage a suspected concussion. The protocol also provides information on when to seek medical attention and how to return a student to school activities.

**When to Seek Medical Attention**

Any student who is suspected of having a concussion should be removed from play and evaluated by a licensed health care provider. The following signs and symptoms may indicate a concussion:

- Headache or pressure in the head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Blurred or double vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Changes in behavior or personality
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Memory loss or difficulty concentrating
- Loss of consciousness
- Slurred speech
- Weakness or numbness in the arms or legs
- Seizures
- Repeated vomiting
- Worsening of the above symptoms

**When to Return to School**

A student who has been diagnosed with a concussion should not return to school until they have been cleared by a licensed health care provider. The student should be allowed to return to school activities only if they are able to do so without any symptoms. The student should be monitored closely for any signs or symptoms of a concussion. If any symptoms reappear, the student should be removed from play and evaluated by a licensed health care provider.

**Return to Play**

A student who has been diagnosed with a concussion should not return to play until they have been cleared by a licensed health care provider. The student should be allowed to return to play only if they are able to do so without any symptoms. The student should be monitored closely for any signs or symptoms of a concussion. If any symptoms reappear, the student should be removed from play and evaluated by a licensed health care provider.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN (EAP)



- An EAP is necessary for any school and all of the venues within these institutions where athletes exercise. The EAP provides information to ensure response to an emergency is rapid, appropriate, controlled and precise. All personnel involved with the organization of athletic activities share a professional and legal responsibility to ensure that guidelines are in place to manage any emergency that could arise. The EAP defines the standard of care for these situations, and therefore an institution without an EAP can be found to be negligent in cases of catastrophic injuries.
- While health care providers are usually responsible for the writing of this document, all those involved with athletic teams (athletic directors, team physicians, athletic trainers, athletic training students, coaches, strength and conditioning coaches, local EMS services) need to be aware and knowledgeable with its contents. It is best to also involve EMS in the writing of the EAP and have the medical director for the school/university approve its contents.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## BENEFITS OF AN EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN



- Risk management strategy: lead to prevention of athletic injury
- Readily prepared for emergency situations
- Ensures that appropriate care is provided in a timely manner
- Decrease chance of legal action taking place
- Protects liability of ATC, Coaches & school administration
- Leads to a more effective emergency response




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## EAP COMPONENTS



- **Emergency Personnel** – Describe the emergency team involved when the EAP is activated and the roles of each person.
- **Emergency Communication** – What communication devices are available, where, what number to call in an emergency, specific information and directions to the venue to provide to EMS response team.
- **Emergency Equipment** – Location of equipment should be quickly accessible and clearly listed. Equipment needs to be maintained on a regular basis.
- **Medical Emergency Transportation** – Describe options and estimated response times for emergency transportation.
- **Venue Directions with a Map** – (should be specific to the venue, and provide instructions for easy access to venue)
- **Roles of First Responders** – Establish scene safety and immediate care of the athlete, activation of EMS, equipment retrieval, direction of EMS to the scene
- **Emergency Action Plan for Non-Medical Emergencies** – These emergencies can refer to the school emergency action plan if one is in place




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## OFFICIALS INFORMATION



- New for 2025-2026: One registration to work both girls and boys season.
- All officials used at high school meets (9-12) must be licensed.
- At least one official at Junior High meets must be licensed.




---

---

---


---

---


---

---

---




### Starting Command Protocol



**Backward start when there is only one official:**

- Bring swimmers to the starting area, the referee/starter announces the event/distance/heat
- Referee/starter blows a long whistle
- When swimmers have surfaced, instruct the swimmers to "Place your Feet."
- When swimmers are stationary, give the command "Take Your Marks"
- If the heat needs to reset, use the command "Stand Please"
- Use the "relax please" instruction when there will be a prolonged period before the starting sequence will begin.
  - When swimmers are stationary, activate the starting signal




---

---

---


---

---


---

---

---




### Starting Command Protocol



**Forward start when there is only one official:**

- Bring swimmers to the starting area, the referee/starter announces the event/distance/heat
- Referee/starter blows a long whistle
- When swimmers are stationary, give the command, "Take Your Marks"
- If the heat needs to reset, use the command "Stand Please"
- Use the "relax please" instruction when there will be a prolonged period before the starting sequence will begin
- When swimmers are stationary, activate the starting signal




---

---

---

---


---

---



---

---

### DIVING



- Girls' Officials that wish to officiate diving MUST pass a diving exam. This short exam can be found on DragonFly. If you do not officiate diving, you are not required to take the diving exam.
- New for 2025 season: Diving Officials are now required to view the NFHS Course: "Judging Springboard Diving". This course is available on the NFHS website. Officials will receive more information about accessing this course before the start of the season.


---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## RULES BOOK



- This is the off year for swimming and diving rule books.
- Will not receive another rule book until the 2026-27 season




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## 2025-26 NFHS SWIMMING AND DIVING RULES CHANGES




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### RULES CHANGES



## VARIATIONS IN POOL AND EQUIPMENT 2-1

- Rules regarding the requirements that cannot be waived by prior mutual consent:
  - water depth
  - starting platform height
  - the distance from the starting platform
  - backstroke ledge specifications
  - use of a recall device
  - backstroke flags




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

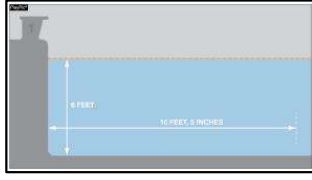
---

**RULES CHANGES**

### BACKSTROKE LEDGE 2-7-3 (NEW)

• Backstroke ledges may be used in competition by state association adoption:

- The starting end depth of the pool shall be no less than 6 feet (1.84 meters) deep, measured from the starting end wall to a minimum of 16 feet, 5 inches (5 meters) from the end wall.



NFHS PLAY RESPONSIBLY COMPETE TOGETHER

---

---

---

---

---

---

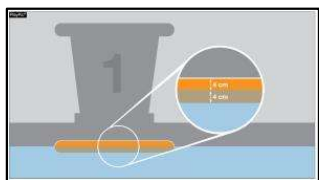
---

---

**RULES CHANGES**

### BACKSTROKE LEDGE 2-7-3 (NEW)

• The backstroke ledge shall be used in competition according to the following specifications:



- The top of the ledge may be adjustable to 1.57 inches (4 centimeters) above or below the water level and shall not be used outside of this range.

NFHS PLAY RESPONSIBLY COMPETE TOGETHER

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**RULES CHANGES**

### BACKSTROKE LEDGE 2-7-3 (NEW)

• The backstroke ledge shall be used in competition according to the following specifications:

- The ledge shall be a minimum of 23.62 inches (60 centimeters) in length.
- The ledge shall be 3.15 inches (8 centimeters) in height, .78 inches (2 centimeters) width with 10 degrees of slope.

Backstroke Ledge Requirements	Measurements
Starting end water depth	Minimum water depth 6 feet (1.84 meters)
Distance of minimum water depth from end wall	Minimum 16 feet, 5 inches (5 meters)
Length of backstroke ledge	Minimum 23.62 inches (60 centimeters)
Height of backstroke ledge	3.15 inches (8 centimeters)
Width of backstroke ledge	78 inches (2 centimeters) with 10 degrees of slope at bottom of ledge
Adjustable setting level for ledges in water	Between 1.57 inches (4 centimeters) above and below water level

NFHS PLAY RESPONSIBLY COMPETE TOGETHER

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

RULES CHANGES

**BACKSTROKE LEDGE  
2-7-3 (NEW)**



- The backstroke ledge shall be used in competition according to the following specifications:
  - The host facility has the option of making the backstroke ledge available.
  - Identical ledges shall be provided by the host team for all lanes.
  - The use of the ledge by individual swimmers is optional.
  - The swimmer is responsible for setting the ledge properly.




---

---

---

---

---

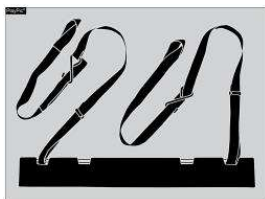
---

---

---

RULES CHANGES

**BACKSTROKE LEDGE  
2-7-3 (NEW)**




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

RULES CHANGES

**BACKSTROKE LEDGE  
8-1-2 (NEW)**



- At least one toe of each foot must be in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad at the start.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

RULES CHANGES

RELAY DECK STARTS

8-3-4a

- The second, third and fourth swimmers shall assume a position with at least one foot stationary at the front edge of the deck.
- The remainder of their body may be in motion prior to the finish of the incoming swimmer.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



2025-26 NFHS SWIMMING AND DIVING EDITORIAL CHANGES




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

EDITORIAL CHANGES

EQUIPMENT FOR SWIMMING EVENTS

2-7-6 PENALTY

- Removed the phrase “an adequate number of” from the 2-7-6 penalty.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

EDITORIAL CHANGES

### UNIFORMS 3-3-3a



- The uniform consists of a suit and, if worn, cap(s).
  - The suit or cap(s) may display the school name, school nickname, school logo, school mascot, and/or the competitor's name.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

EDITORIAL CHANGES

### UNIFORMS 3-3-3 and 3-3-4 PENALTIES



- Re-inserted the penalties for Rule 3-3-3 when an official discovers a competitor wearing illegal attire as described, which applies to swimmers and divers.
- Edited language in the penalties for Rule 3-3-4 which applies to swimmers only.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

EDITORIAL CHANGES

### BACKSTROKE FINISH 8-2-1e



- After breaking the surface of the water, the swimmer must remain on the surface (any part of the swimmer's body is on or above the surface) except for the turns and the finish.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---




**2025-26 NFHS  
SWIMMING AND  
DIVING POINTS OF  
EMPHASIS**




---

---

---

---

---


---

---


---

**POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

**BACKSTROKE STARTING LEDGE EDUCATION**



- As of the 2025-26 school year, state associations may adopt rules permitting the use of backstroke ledges.
- Based on research conducted by Indiana University, DePauw University, and input from the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee.
- State associations must clearly articulate the importance of a teaching protocol to insure risk minimization.




---

---

---

---

---


---

---


---

**POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

**BACKSTROKE STARTING LEDGE EDUCATION**



- Coaches should closely monitor each stage of teaching progression.
- Focus on skill progression, safety, controlled environment practices, and supervised warm-ups.
- Swimmers must demonstrate proficiency in executing a backstroke start before progressing to its use in competition.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

RULES CHANGES

### BACKSTROKE STARTING LEDGE EDUCATION



- Additional educational resources may be accessed via the swimming and diving page of NFHS.org, the NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules Interpretation PowerPoint, and the new NFHS Swimming and Diving Pre-Season Guide. A link to the teaching progression is below can be accessed here:

<https://nfhs.box.com/shared/static/qsyezrx4g7nfqvj167mIngaar9q04ppd.pdf>




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

### DIVING VIABILITY AND IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION



- Participation data and state association testimonials highlight a decline in the number of athletes and schools offering diving.
- Two key areas:
  - maintaining the viability of diving
  - importance of providing comprehensive educational resources to support and grow diving.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### IHSAA/IGHS AU Contact Information



IHSAA – Tyler Lown  
 tlown@iahsaa.org  
 515-432-2011x238



IGHS AU – Jason Eslinger  
 jason.eslinger@ighsau.org  
 515-401-1836




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**DO NOT STOP THIS PRESENTATION OR CLOSE YOUR BROWSER**

At the conclusion of the verification page, you will be provided with a certificate of completion.

Coaches – please print three (3) copies of the verification certificate

One for your records

One for your administrator

One for your coaching authorization renewal

Officials – please print one copy of the certificate for your files

You may now click on the link to the bottom of your screen that says:

Click here to go to the verification page

You will be directed to the verification screen followed by the verification certificate



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---