

Breaststroke Rule Simplified in High School Swimming

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Becky Oakes

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 15, 2013) — High school swimmers in the breaststroke event will now be permitted to execute a single butterfly kick on the start or turn at any time prior to the first breaststroke kick.

“It was extremely difficult for officials to observe and consistently judge the initiation of the arm stroke on the start and turns,” said Becky Oakes, NFHS director of sports and staff liaison to the Swimming and Diving Rules Committee. “The committee wanted to provide consistency for the swimmers as to when the butterfly kick is permitted and the observation by the officials across all lanes for a legal or illegal use of the butterfly kick. Swimmers may now use the butterfly kick in the location that best benefits the individual swimmer before the breaststroke kick.”

This change and five other rules revisions were approved by the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) Swimming and Diving Rules Committee at its March 24-26 meeting in Indianapolis. All rules changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

As new construction and modifications to facilities occur, the committee altered Rule 2-7-2b to allow the installation of new track-style starting blocks with wedges.

In another change, competitors will no longer be asked to step down from the starting platform if an illegal suit is discovered. The race will be conducted and the swimmer in violation shall be disqualified at the conclusion of the heat.

“Having swimmers step down from the platform prior to the start of a race is not the most desired way to enforce a penalty,” Oakes said. “It is awkward for the swimmers to get up and down from the platform, and it may disrupt the focus of the other swimmers who are within the rules.”

In keeping up with technology, the committee voted to add a section concerning electronic devices. Rule 3-5 allows team personnel to use electronic devices to transmit or record information about a competitor’s performance. The rule does not allow for devices to be used as a form of communication with a competitor while he or she is swimming or diving.

“It addresses the advances we have seen in technology,” Oakes said. “The technology, if used properly, can be a good coaching aide.”

The lone change made to the diving section of the rules book was the addition of Rule 9-7-4e, which clarifies straight-body position for the flying somersault dives (1 and 1½).

Swimming/diving is the eighth-most popular sport for girls and 10th among boys at the high school level. According to the 2011-12 High School Athletics Participation Survey, 160,456 girls were involved in swimming/diving and 133,823 boys participate in the sport.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 16 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.6 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

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