At the July 22, 2015, PIAA Board of Directors' meeting (Minutes - page 20), the Board modified Rule 3-3-5 and will continue to prohibit jewelry being worn by participating athletes. Rule 3-3-5 on page 22 and Situations on page 25 and 26 of the 2014-2015 NFHS Swimming and Diving and Water Polo RULES BOOK, will continue to be in effect. See below:

ART.5 ... A competitor shall not wear jewelry. When it is discovered that any competitor is wearing jewelry prior to the start of that heat/round, he/she shall not permitted to participate in an event/dive until the jewelry is removed

1. Medical-alert medals are not considered jewelry, must be taped to the body and alert may be visible.
2. Religious medals are not considered jewelry, must be worn under the uniform and taped to the body.
3. Hair-restraining devices are considered legal, provided they are functioning and are being worn in the hair during the event.

NOTE: When the competitor starts an event/round and is observed with jewelry he/she shall complete that heat/round and be notified to remove the jewelry before becoming eligible for any further participation. The competitor's coach shall be notified of the violation (4-2-2).

PENALTY: When an official discovers a competitor wearing jewelry a subsequent time within the same meet, the official shall:

1. When prior to the start of the heat/round, notify the competitor to remove the jewelry before becoming eligible to compete;
2. When during or after the heat/round, notify the competitor and his/her coach at the completion of that heat/round and disqualification from the event (or a failed dive) for failure to remove jewelry;
3. Notify the competitor he/she is ineligible to compete in further competition until compliant with Rule 3-3-5.

SITUATIONS

3.3.5 SITUATION A: A competitor is observed wearing jewelry (a) while the swimmer is walking to the starting platform prior to the start of the swimmer’s event; (b) after the swimmer has been called (long whistle is blown) onto the starting platform and the starter is ready to begin the race; (c) after the diver assumes a starting position; (d) while the swimmer is competing in an event.
RULING: (A) The swimmer is directed by the official to remove the jewelry and shall not be permitted to participate in the event until the jewelry is removed; (b), (c) and (d) the competitor is allowed to complete the event, the official will direct the competitor to remove the jewelry, and the competitor will not be permitted to participate in any subsequent events until jewelry is removed.

COMMENT: The official in (b), (c) and (d) shall notify a member of the competitor’s coaching staff of the violation and restriction. (1-3-4,1-3-15, 3-3-5 Penalty, 3-3-6,4-2-2e)

3.3.5 SITUATION B: A diver in Round 3 takes her position on the diving board. The official notices that she has on earrings. The same diver had been notified in Round 1 and had removed the earrings to compete. After the dive, the referee rules the dive as failed and notifies the diver and his/her coach as to the diver being ineligible for any further diving or swimming competition unless he/she removes the illegal item.

RULING: Correct procedure.

COMMENT: When a subsequent violation is discovered after the initial notification to the coach and competitor, the dive is a failed dive and notification of ineligibility to compete unless the jewelry is removed. (3-3-5 Penalty)

3.3.5 SITUATION C: A competitor steps onto the starting platform or assumes a starting position on the diving board with: (a) an elastic band in her ponytail; (b) a rope bracelet; (c) earrings, (d) a “scrunchy” or rubber band on the wrist.

RULING: (a) is legal, provided the hair restraint device is functioning and being worn in the hair during the event; (b), (c), and (d) are illegal and the referee shall direct the competitor to remove the illegal jewelry after completion of this race/dive and not permit further competition until the illegal jewelry is removed and shall notify the competitor’s coach. (4-2-2e)

3.3.6 SITUATION: A referee: (a) at the coaches meeting; (b) at a captain’s meeting; (c) makes an announcement on the pool deck that no jewelry is allowed during competition. The referee informs the coaches and swimmers that this serves as their first warning.

RULING: Incorrect procedure.

COMMENT: The intent of the rule was that the referee is to warn the swimmer wearing jewelry individually as he/she reports to the starting area.
POST MEET CONFERENCES

Post meet conferences must be conducted. They don’t need to be long or drawn out. Conducting these conferences requires all officials to put their feelings aside, be honest, objective and professional. The “gotcha” attitude has no place in life and certainly not in officiating as it relates to our fellow officials, coaches, fans and most importantly, the student-athletes.

These brief sessions should be conducted in a learning environment, away from any and all distractions. Constructive criticism, given in a positive manner, can make us better officials at our next meet and in years to come. We can all improve in what we do. It’s a sad day when we don’t learn something new.

Questions to be asked at conferences: Did we officiate at our best? Were we spot on with a call? Were we in the best position to make that call the coach questioned? Were all our interactions done in a professional manner with no confrontational attitude? Was the diving judging fair, scores consistent and were breaks in position caught, etc?

Bottom line is, we are all on the same team and, as such, we need to accept and apply constructive criticism including peer assessment by being open minded and looking towards self-improvement.

Using part of the Army’s slogan...We ( Officials) need to be the best that we can be. We owe it to ourselves, to other officials but most importantly and above all, to the student athletes.

PROCEDURE WHEN AN ILLEGAL SWIM SUIT IS OBSERVED

When a swimmer or diver is observed in an illegal suit, two officials must agree that the suit, worn by the swimmer/diver, is illegal. If one of the two officials is not the meet referee, the violation must be reported to the meet referee. The meet referee and one of the two officials who observed the illegal suit, shall notify the coach of the violation. Officials must NEVER speak to swimmers/divers regarding suit violations in the absence of their coach.

Clarification/Interpretation of Rule 3-3-1 thru 3-3-3 Uniform:
(The following applies to all levels of competition and includes warm-ups for swimmers and divers.
Female swimmers/divers shall not pull the suit/straps past the shoulders down to the waist and wear sports bras, bikini tops or halter tops. When on deck, the straps of a competition/performance suit may be lowered off the shoulders PROVIDED the one piece drag suit is on top of the competition suit, and has the straps in place on the shoulders.
A drag suit may be worn over a competition suit for warm-ups.
All suits worn on deck (except drag suits) shall meet ALL requirements of the uniform rule.
Leggings and pantyhose may be worn with a competition suit for warm-ups.)
SITUATION:  A female athlete, while on deck, puts on a t-shirt, sweatshirt or jacket over the top of the suit and proceeds to lower the straps underneath the clothing, would that be considered a deck change?

No, it is not considered deck changing. If observed by officials, it is a violation of the Rule 3-3-1 thru 3-3-3, Penalties, No. 1 in the 2017-2018 NFHS Swimming Rules, page 25 and the Clarification of the rule contained in the 2017-2018 Swimming and Diving Preseason Bulletin, page 5.

When a female swimmer is on deck at a meet, the shoulder straps of the swim suit must be on the shoulders at all times.

VIOLATION OF THE FEET FIRST WATER ENTRY

SITUATION:  After completing their event, swimmers were “diving” into a separate warm-down pool. The swimmers were warned several times about the proper entry into the pool (feet first only-no diving) but these warnings were ignored. The coach was also approached about the situation several times and ultimately asked “what did the official expect him to do.”

If there is a separate warm-down pool, explain during the Coaches and Captains’ meeting the procedure for entry into the pool which is feet first only with the goal being “risk minimization.” Also, explain the penalty if the policy is violated.

First violation of the policy by any swimmer on a team, the swimmer and coach are warned.

Second violation of the policy by any swimmer on a team, Unacceptable Conduct is assessed. The swimmer is disqualified from the event that he/she just swam. Additionally, coach is warned that any further violations will result in the same penalty, Unacceptable Conduct.

DUAL CONFIRMATION ON RELAYS

SITUATION 4.2.2.B: In a non-championship meet, a takeoff judge signals a violation, but the referee also observed the exchange and does not disqualify the swimmer.

RULING: If convinced there was not a violation, the referee, whose decision in such matters is final, may overrule the takeoff judge and not disqualify the swimmer.

Dual confirmation of takeoff judging is strongly recommended.
TRANSGENDER SWIMMERS

The principal of a High School makes the decision on the gender that the student athlete competes as and this will be accepted by the PIAA. (Page 92 in the PIAA Handbook) If a uniform accommodation is needed, the principal will contact the PIAA for a uniform modification and a letter from Dr. Lombardi will accompany permission on all uniform modifications.

PROPOSED RULE CHANGES

All coaches and officials can file a request at nfhs.org/RuleChangeProposal. Please do so by February 1st so that Pat Gebhart will receive these and be able to review them for submission to NFHS by February 15th. Please consider sharing your proposals with your local interpreter or myself, Connie Harakal at charakal7074@gmail.com, for input to Pat.

NFHS LEARN

The course Officiating Swimming and Diving explores the elements of professional development and the fundamentals of officiating strokes and turns. The course also explores officiating and judging diving and provides a practicum of 30 dives. The course costs $20 and there is a $10 discount for officials who are also members of NFHS.

August 3 & 4, 2018
Hilton Harrisburg