Situation #1: During the 400 Free Relay, the referee notices that two of the relays have finished way ahead of the competition and they shake hands and begin to get out of the pool.

Answer: If they get out of the pool they may not re-enter unless:
- They ask the referee if they can re-enter the water
- They are disqualified - refer to Rule 3.6.4
- If they get out of the pool and return without referee approval
- If they get partway out of the pool and sit on the deck and return to the pool:
  - If the rest of the swimmers are not finished, they are disqualified from this event Rule 3.6.4
  - If the rest of the swimmers are finished, they are disqualified from their next event or in this case, there is no disqualification because it is the last event. Rule 3.6.4 D
  - If they have asked the referee for permission, there is no penalty

Situation #2: A school does not have automatic timing and due to costs, they decide to put one timer on a lane during their meets. Is this possible?

Answer: Rule 4.9.3 says that a minimum of two timers are required per lane for the time to count. Officials are calling the finish but are not responsible for timing. The meet can be scored but times are not valid unless there are two timers per lane. Rule 6.2.2 page 54

Situation #3: How do you handle a meet at a pool with no 16.4 yard markings?

Answer: If markings are not present, the host school may use temporary markings on the deck and the referee should report the problem to the host school administration. Rule 2.4.5 B. pg. 13
RECENT INTERPRETATIONS CONTINUED

**Situation #4:** An official noticed that a swimmer was wearing an ankle bracelet during the meet. The official asked the swimmer why he was wearing jewelry and he indicated that it was a commemorative bracelet for his deceased uncle.

**Answer:** The coach, being new, was unaware of the ruling and was directed to contact the PIAA for a ruling. Rule 3.3.2. B. for an accommodation.

**Situation #5:** A swimmer “hot dogs” a pool entry for the backstroke event, how is this handled?

**Answer:** The swimmer is allowed to swim the race, so as not to undermine all swimmer’s readiness, and at the end of the race, the official goes over to the coach and tells them that they are disqualified because they did not step into the pool when directed but “hot dogged” their entry, which was unacceptable behavior. Rule 3.6.2.a Penalty. The swimmer did enter feet first which would not violate Rule 8.1.3 Penalty.

**Situation #6:** Is it necessary to get both coach’s signatures on the back of the score sheet to verify each team’s entries, even if they are using electronic entries?

**Answer:** Yes, according to Rule 3.2.4, the coach’s signature should accompany the competitor’s first and last name, school and event. When using electronic entries, this signature on the back of the score sheet suffices for swimming entries. It also verifies that they are acting in accordance with the Sportsmanship message.

**Situation #7:** If an interpretation of a rule is in question, how much time does the official have at the end of the meet before the official scoresheet must be signed?

**Answer:** Rule 4.2.3 The referee has within one hour after the meet to check tabulations, record the time the meet was completed and sign the scoresheet. This one hour is the time stipulated in the NFHS Rule Book for completion on the Referee’s duties and shall not be set aside.

**Situation #8:** How is a triangular meet scored with three teams and two entries per team?

**Answer:** Using the multi team scoring table in Rule 7.1.3, five places score - 6-4-3-2-1 and the relay points are doubled - 12-8-6-4-2. When this meet is scored as a double or triple dual, use Rule 7.1.2 a for two entries per team or 7.1.2b for three entries per team and relays only score three places with no sweeping all three.

**Situation #9:** How many laps (lengths) are permitted after the 500 Freestyle?

**Answer:** On the Referee’s Card, side 1, #7 it reads: If no separate warm down area, explain how warm down for the 500 free is conducted. (this is done at the Captains and Coaches Meeting and performed after all swimmers have finished the race). Two lengths (laps) of the pool shall be permitted at the conclusion. It is the swimmers choice to swim 0,1 or 2 lengths (laps) when permitted.
### RECENT INTERPRETATIONS CONTINUED

**Situation #10:** If there are empty lanes in a tri-meet, who gets first choice on the empty lanes?
- Ex. In a 6 lane pool, Team A has 2 entries, Team B has 2 entries but Team C has only 1. Team A is the home team.

**Answer:** This is an issue that needs to be figured out by the coaches and is fair to them. It is not really an official’s concern, or an issue of who is the home team, and if they coaches can’t agree to share, then no one swims in the open lane(s).

**Situation #11:** A swimmer completes the 500 freestyle. She remains in the water waiting for the remainder of the competitors to complete the event. Approximately two minutes have elapsed and the swimmer in lane 1 has not completed the event. During the course of her swim, her cap came off and went to the bottom of the pool. She then removes her hair tie, dips her head under water, in her lane, and comes back up and smooths her hair and places the hair tie on her wrist. The call was a DQ for a violation of the jewelry rule.

**Answer:** First, she had finished her swim and the referee should have simply said to the swimmer to make herself legal before her next swim. We do not have automatic disqualification for jewelry in PA, we give the athlete a warning, to make themselves legal before their next event and if they blatantly refuse and appear at the next event with jewelry, then we disqualify them.

**Situation #12:** Can a medical note be accepted from a chiropractor and does the note need a start and end date?

**Answer:** A medical note can only be accepted from an MD or DO, a chiropractor is not included in these groups and cannot be accepted from them. The note must be for the current season and the start and end date is to gauge the time of care. If there is not an end date on the note, please ask them to get the doctor to place an end date on the note at their next visit.

**Situation #13:** Can an official have a cell phone clipped on their belt during a meet?

**Answer:** We should not be wearing a cell phone during a meet that we are officiating unless we have a family emergency and are expecting a call. This phone could be construed by spectators or parents as a means for the official to take pictures. Their perception of why you might have a phone is their reality and we don’t want officials to be in legal jeopardy. This applies to iPads also.

**Situation #14:** The last swimmer on a relay team exits the water after swimming the final leg of the 400 freestyle relay and the referee disqualifies the team for exiting the pool before the relay was finished. Is this the correct call?

**Answer:** There is NO PENALTY for exiting the pool by the last swimmer on a relay team before the event is over. If they were to exit and return to the water before the event was over without referee permission, they would be disqualified.

**Situation #15:** Are watches part of the official’s uniform because we need a final meet time if the clock on the wall doesn’t work?

**Answer:** No, watches can be put in your pocket during the meet and when they are needed at the end of the meet, they can be taken out to read the time. Fitbits are also not allowable and can be put in your pocket and will work from there.
Situation #16: If the head coach is on deck at the beginning of the meet, must they attend the coaches and captain's meeting?

Answer: As far as the head coach attending the meeting, it would be the preference, but we all know that many last minute issues, too numerous to name, could come up. So, an assistant coach can be sent with no penalty. Rule 4.2.1.d

Situation #17: How do we address issues with athletes wearing bracelets, fit bits, watches, earbuds and having cell phones on deck?

Answer: We are at the meet to officiate and if the swimmer or diver has shown up on the board or at the blocks wearing these items, they must be reminded to make themselves legal before competition. The use of cell phones, earbuds and other electronics on deck are not under NFHS ruling and are a coaches' issue on deck and not an official's to get involved with. NFHS does address the use of electronic devices to transmit and record information pertaining to a competitor's performance, provided there is no interference with the administration of the meet. Rule 3.5 page 32.

Situation #18: Are non-team swimmers allowed to swim relays in Invitational Meets?

Answer: Non-team swimmers do not have a team and therefore should not enter a relay team in competition. They can swim in individual events if invited. See the Pre-season Bulletin page 8.

Situation #19: Can a swimmer leave the water after an event before the race is over, does this include the 500 Freestyle?

Answer: A swimmer can leave the pool after they have finished swimming their race with no penalty and if they have gotten out after the 500 Freestyle and wish to warm down, they may ask the referee for permission to re-enter the water if they want to do a warm down. But it is the swimmer’s choice to do a warm down or not.

Situation #20: Can swimmers swim or dive with temporary skin tattoos and appliques during a meet?

Answer: Athletes are permitted to have permanent or temporary tattoos as long as they are not offensive.

All proposed Rule Changes should be filled out on line at: nfhs.org/RuleChangeProposal by February 1st and please share your concerns with Connie Harakal at charakal7074@gmail.com

If you are interested in working the State Meet in the future, it is required that you attend the PIAA State Official's Convention once every five years, and be an official in good standing. Please consider attending this year's convention.

August 9 & 10, 2019
Hilton Harrisburg