



NFHS VIRTUAL SWIMMING AND DIVING COMPETITION

Considerations for High School Competition

The NFHS rules which govern high school swimming and diving competition assume that such competition will be “head-to-head” with ALL participants engaging in an environment that is identical for all and thus equitable to all. “Virtual” competition cannot provide such identical conditions, however. With that understanding in mind, there are no NFHS rules provisions that would prohibit “virtual” competition when unique conditions, such as a pandemic, necessitate its use.

The following are some best practices and suggestions to guide state associations in overseeing “virtual” swimming and diving competition.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Competition for each team/school involved should take place in a venue that meets all requirements of Rule 2 (Pool, Lanes, and Equipment Specifications) and Rule 9 (Diving Competition), with special emphasis on risk minimization.
- Competition should be officiated by qualified personnel of sufficient number (see Rule 4-1-3) to assure fair results at each location. The meet must be conducted under the supervision of a meet referee. The official(s) may not be coaches of the team(s) involved in the meet.
- Winner determination: It is recommended that each individual referee shall keep a copy of the team results (printed or electronic). The visiting team will submit their results to home team. The home team shall merge the results and determine the winner. Any questions/disputes shall be discussed with respective referees.
- All rules regarding athlete entry, participation and conduct should apply; technical rules for competition (Rules 8 and 9) should be enforced.
- The course should be the same at each site. We recommend teams compete in short course yards or short course meters, however, it is permissible to use conversion chart in cases where this standard cannot be met.
- Virtual contests should be conducted during the same week.

SWIMMING

- A swimmer can achieve a qualifying time during a “virtual” meet that is used for future purposes such as the district championships. Fully automatic timing should be mandated in the case of qualifying times.
- Participants in each race should be limited only to those eligible to score points. Exhibition swimmers for virtual meets are permitted, but shall not be used for pacing.
- Normal breaks as described in Rule 5-1 of the NFHS Swimming and Diving rules book shall apply. The pace of the meet shall follow normal procedure.
- Competition to be conducted using manual watches or semi-automatic timed results. Fully automatic timing is the most equitable in a “virtual” situation, but some facilities may not be able to offer that environment. Be aware that it will not be possible for the meet referee or other official to perform an across-the-board place pick to serve as a “check” on the times from stop watches/buttons. Regardless, the same timing protocol should be used at all venues involved in the “virtual” competition. There should be no mixing of fully automatic timing, semi-automatic timing, or manual watches.

DIVING

- Scores from the “virtual” competition may be permitted for purposes other than deciding the outcome of the immediate “virtual” competition.
- A diver can achieve a qualifying score for subsequent competition via a “virtual” meet.
- Divers must be scored/judged by PIAA registered officials.