



MEMORANDUM

February 3, 2023

VIA EMAIL

TO: Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Conference Commissioners and Head Coaches

FROM: Greg Lockard, Secretary Rules Editor,
NCAA Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Rules Committee

SUBJECT: NCAA Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Pre-Championships Rules Review

NCAA Rules Process:

- Waiver Requests – Institutions requesting a waiver of the NCAA Swimming and Diving playing rules must submit the request in writing to the NCAA Secretary-Rules Editor, Greg Lockard (greg@swimdiverules.com). Waiver requests must include the name(s) of the student-athlete, rationale for requesting a waiver of the specific playing rule and any other pertinent documentation (e.g. medical documentation), if necessary.
- The NCAA Swimming and Diving Rules change process occurs every two years, and will begin again in January 2023, with a call for suggested items for consideration. A non-binding survey will be distributed to the entire NCAA membership, and the results will be discussed at the College Swimming Coaches Convention in May, followed by consideration for adoption by the Swimming and Diving Rules Committee, at the annual meeting in May. Newly adopted rules will be included in the 2023-2024, 2024-2025 rule book that will be released on September 1, 2023.
- The current rules book may be downloaded or purchased from NCAA publications (www.ncaapublications.com).

Clarification Regarding Waiver Process for the Use of Athletic or Kinesiology Tape for Swimmers

The NCAA Swimming and Diving playing rules (Rule 3-1-4) restrict the use of athletic tape, kinesiology tape and/or wrist guards by swimmers. Several questions have been raised regarding the waiver process following the [November Rules Newsletter](#). The use of tape, kinesiology tape, and compression sleeves are permitted to treat a documented medical condition to allow swimmers to compete. Requests for use must be submitted to the Secretary Rules Editor, with a letter and documentation from a designated health official. Upon approval, the referee must be presented with documentation before each subsequent meet.

It is important to note that waivers shall be requested for long term or as needed tape needs that are known prior to leaving for the meet location. **However, in the event a waiver is needed for the use of tape or kinesiology tape for an injury or medical condition that occurs during a competition**

or immediately preceding the event, and time is of the essence, the documentation from the medical personnel may be presented directly to the meet referee.

Institutions requesting a waiver, of any NCAA Swimming and Diving playing rule, must submit the request in writing to the NCAA Secretary-Rules Editor, Greg Lockard (greg@swimdiverules.com). Waivers must include the name(s) of the student-athlete, rationale for the requested waiver of the specific playing rules and any other pertinent documentation (e.g., medical documentation), if necessary.

Alternatively, divers are permitted to compete with tape, kinesiology tape and/or wrist guards without medical documentation.

Interpretation: FINA Breaststroke Rule

FINA has approved a rule change to breaststroke, which will take effect on January 1, 2023 for both FINA competition and USA Swimming competition. It is the policy of the NCAA to adopt all technical rules that are approved by FINA and USA Swimming, and it has been customary to adopt those rules on the same effective date for FINA and USA Swimming.

The highlighted portion of the current rules below will be removed by FINA, USA Swimming, and NCAA Swimming and Diving as of January 1, 2023.

FINA Rule 7.2 “All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous **and on the same horizontal plane** without alternating movement.”

FINA Rule 7.4 “All movements of the legs shall be simultaneous **and on the same horizontal plane** without alternating movement.”

Interpretation: Backstroke Ledges

- **Rule 2-2-1-a:**
When using a backstroke ledge at the start, the toes of both feet must be in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad. Bending the toes over the top of the touchpad is prohibited.
- **Interpretation:**
When backstroke ledges are utilized, they must be positioned and utilized as intended by the manufacturer, which includes a maximum of 10 degrees of slope. Specifically, the ledge(s) may not be turned or adjusted to change the intended use or exceed the maximum of 10 degrees of slope.

Rule Reminders:

- **Priority of Timing Equipment:** “For a time to be considered for entry into an NCAA championship it must have been achieved using priority level one equipment (automatic equipment).

If a malfunction is confirmed by the head judge with priority level one equipment, then priority level two equipment (two-button semiautomatic equipment) is acceptable.

If a malfunction is confirmed by the head judge with priority level two equipment, then priority level three equipment (two manual watches per lane) is acceptable. (See Rule 4-16-4.)

No other priority level is acceptable for NCAA championships time qualification.” (Rule 4-21-2-d)

- **Acceptable USA Swimming Meets:** Select USA Swimming and USA Diving meets which are acceptable for achievement of time standards, consideration standards and optional-entry standards may be designated each year by the NCAA Swimming and Diving Championship Committee. Examples include USA Swimming National Championships, FINA Short Course World Championships and USA Swimming Pro Series meets. (Rule 9-1-1-h)

The Division I Swimming and Diving Championship Committee approved the following meets at which such standards may be achieved for the 2023 championships: the USA Swimming National Championships, FINA World Swimming Championships and USA Diving National Championships. The committee will consider requests from the membership for another country’s diving national championship/trial meets on a case-by-case basis. The committee did not support including USA Swimming Pro Series meets on the approved list.

- **Initial Distance Time Standards:** A time standard, consideration standard or an optional-entry standard may be achieved over an initial distance within any individual or relay race that is conducted according to the criteria established for bona fide competition. This rule applies to competitors who are eligible to score in regularly scheduled and scored events, and to exhibition competitors in such events. This rule does not apply to competitors in time-standard trials. (Rule 9-2-1-c)
- **Mixing Genders: Rule 5:** “Note: It is not permissible to mix genders in any heat or event, in non-championships or non-NCAA championships, including time trials and/or time standard trials.”

- **Suits and Logos:** The only responsibility that a meet referee has regarding logos is to ensure that there is not more than a single manufacturer's logo on a swimsuit and a single post-construction institutional logo that does not exceed 9 square inches. The size of the manufacturer's logo is no longer a playing rules issue; and while potentially a bylaw issue, falls outside of the jurisdiction of meet officials. The meet officials have no jurisdiction over logos or markings on any other piece of apparel such as caps or warm-ups, etc. (Rule 3-1)
- **Kinesiology Tape:** The use of tape, kinesiology tape, and compression sleeves are permitted to treat a documented medical condition to allow swimmers to compete. Requests for use must be submitted to the Secretary Rules Editor, with a letter and documentation from a designated health official. Upon approval, the referee must be presented with documentation before each subsequent meet. Alternatively, divers are permitted to compete with tape, kinesiology tape and/or wrist guards without medical documentation. (Rule 3-1-4)
- **Backup Timers:** "Regardless of the availability of automatic and/or semiautomatic timing equipment, a minimum of one human timer per lane and one manual watch per lane is required for all non-NCAA championships meets and is recommended for all nonchampionships meets. In addition, for an NCAA championship qualification standard, two human timers, each with a manual watch, are required if there is a malfunction with priority level one or two equipment." (Rule 4-16-2)
- **Failure to Compete:** Failure to compete in a preliminary heat of a prelim/finals event is simply a disqualification and a charged event with no further penalty. Failure to compete in a timed final or in a final that had preliminary qualification remains a disqualification and prohibits further competition in the meet. (Rule 5-1-1a)
- **Medical Scratches** – All requests for a medical scratch must include a written certification from a physician or a certified athletic trainer. A written certified request must be made, to enable a student athlete to be reinstated to compete in the same competition. (5-1-1d)
- **Declared False Start vs. Scratching:** Scratching is when a swimmer is eliminated by the coach following normal scratch protocol and is relieved of the requirement to swim and is not charged with an event swum. A declared false start is actually a disqualification and counts as an event contested for the student athlete. Since a declared false start doesn't take place until the heat of the race occurs, a coach can rescind a declared false start without penalty. If a relay should take a declared false start, they **must** turn in an entry card listing four eligible athletes and they are all in turn charged with an event.
(Rule 5-3-4)

- **Relay Entries/Changes:** If a relay event has preliminary qualification heats and finals, changes can be made in the relay line-up between preliminary and final heats (or between preliminary heats and swim offs when applicable). If a relay event is a timed final, a student-athlete may swim on only one relay team even if they are swum with some heats in the morning and some in the afternoon, or even if some relays are non-scoring. A student-athlete can only compete on one relay – it is not permissible to swim on both an exhibition and a scoring relay in the same event. (Rule 5-7-1g)
- **Seeding vs. Reseeding:** A heat cannot be seeded with less than three competitors in it. However, once a heat is seeded, if declared false starts cause the heat to go below three, the heat may be swum because the declared false starts are disqualifications and the rule only speaks to seeding with a minimum of three participants. Since a coach can rescind the declared false starts, under current rules you DO NOT reseed when the heat goes below three. (Rule 5-7-3d)
- **Appeal Procedure** – Must be submitted in writing within 15 minutes after the finish of the final heat of the event in question. Appeals may only be lodged for errors in the recording of data, scoring and nonjudgmental errors in application of rules. The use of video is not permitted during the appeal process. If the referee uses video to review relay judging platforms, his/her decision is a judgement call and cannot be appealed. The decision of a meet committee is final. (Rule 8-4-3)

End-Of-Season-Competitions - Division I institutions choosing to participate in end-of-season swimming and diving competitions that are held within the last 10 days of the qualifying period, with the exception of conference championships, must ensure that the meet host completes this form:https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/championships/sports/swimdive/d1/2022-23D1XSW_EndofSeasonMeetCompetitionForm.pdf, and submits to John Bugner at jbugner@ncaa.org; 317-917-6529 (women's) or Paige Newman at pnewman@ncaa.org (men's) no later than 1 p.m. (Eastern time) Monday, Feb. 27, 2023 for women and Monday, March 6, 2023 for men.

COVID-19 Waivers for 2022-2023 Season:

- **There are no COVID-19 Waivers approved for the 2022-2023 season.**

Note: (Rule 5-7) When seeding the swimmers, intentionally leaving empty lanes between them is not permitted.

2023 NCAA Championships:

- Division II Men and Women – Indianapolis, IN (March 8-11, 2023)
- Division III Men and Women – Greensboro, NC, IN (March 15-18, 2023)
- Division I Women – Knoxville, TN (March 15-18, 2023)
- Division I Men – Minneapolis, MN (March 22-25, 2023)

Throughout the year, if you have questions or need to request an interpretation, please contact me via email at greg@swimdiverules.com or by phone at 973-486-5501.

Greg Lockard, Secretary-Rules Editor
NCAA Swimming & Diving Rules Committee

cc: NCAA Swimming and Diving Rule Committee
Selected NCAA staff