



MEMORANDUM

August 10, 2026

VIA EMAIL

TO: Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Conference Commissioners, Head Coaches, and NCAA Registered Officials

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 Rules Preseason Reminders

With the new playing season upon us, I would like to wish the entire membership the best of luck during the coming season. I look forward to working closely with the membership to continue to improve and elevate the sport of swimming and diving. If you have any questions throughout the year, or if you need to request an interpretation, please contact me via email at greg@swimdiverules.com or by phone at (973) 486-5501.

NCAA Rules Process:

The NCAA Swimming and Diving Rules change process occurs every two years, and began in January 2025, with a call for suggested items for consideration. A non-binding survey was distributed to the entire NCAA membership, and the results were discussed at the College Swimming Coaches Convention, followed by consideration for adoption by the Swimming and Diving Rules Committee, in May. The newly adopted rules are included in the rules book that was released on August 15, 2025, and is effective for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 seasons. The rules book may be downloaded or purchased from NCAA publications (www.ncaapublications.com). The NCAA has a new website for swimming and diving playing rules and can be found [here](#).

NCAA Officials Program:

- All officials that wish to be NCAA registered officials are required to take the new test, which was updated and released on August 15, 2025.
- Most conferences mandate the use of NCAA registered officials, and only registered officials can be selected to officiate at the NCAA Championships, in the three divisions.
- Officials registration/test link:
<https://www.usaswimming.org/officials/ncaa-officials>

Pre-season Reminders:

Listed below are key pre-season items and deadlines that may be applicable to you or your institution.

Deadlines:

September 1: If an institution not having three-meter equipment does not wish to compete in three-meter events at away meets, it must notify each host institution at the time of contract or not later than Sept. 1 of that academic year (Rule 6-1-2-b). In this case, two one-meter events shall be held as prescribed in Rule 6-1-2-a.

September 1: If a host institution has no three-meter equipment available, it must notify all opponents of the facility limitations at the contracted time of the agreement, or not later than Sept. 1 of the academic year (Rule 6-1-2-c). In this case, two, one-meter events shall be held as prescribed in Rule 6-1-2-a.

Failure to Notify: If the host institution fails to notify the visiting team as prescribed (by September 1) that it does not have a one-and/or three-meter facility, then the visiting team shall be awarded the maximum number of points any one team could score in both events had both events been held. The host institution shall receive no points for either the one-meter or three-meter events (Rule 6-1-2-d).

September 1: Deadline for host institutions to notify opponents that they are required to eliminate diving at home meets because of a facility that does not conform to minimum depth standards (Rule 6-1-3-c). Under these circumstances, diving must be eliminated from all home competitions during the current academic year, and no points will be awarded for diving events.

Additionally, the choice not to have divers or a diving program is an individual institutional decision but does not automatically eliminate the diving events when an institution travels to an away contest or at a conference championship meet. The events are still conducted for any institutions with divers entered.

Swimsuit Waiver: Swimmers or divers seeking an exception from the swimsuit rules may request a waiver from the NCAA swimming and diving secretary-rules editor (Rule 3.1.1.d.6).

Rules Changes:

Listed below are several rules changes that were recently adopted in conjunction with the technical swimming rules changes by World Aquatic and USA Swimming. The changes will be included in the revised digital version of the NCAA Swimming and Diving Rules Book, as of August 15, 2026.

Butterfly

Rule 2-2-3-e. Finish — At the finish, the body shall be on the breast and the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. Additionally, once some part of the head of the swimmer has passed the final 5-meter mark (long course and short course meters) or 5-yard mark (short course yards), immediately prior to reaching for the finish, the swimmer may be completely submerged.

Freestyle

Rule 2-2-4-d. Finish — The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of their person touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance. Additionally, once some part of the head of the swimmer has passed the final 5-meter mark (long course and short course meters) or 5-yard mark (short course yards), immediately prior to reaching for the finish, the swimmer may be completely submerged.

Individual Medley

Rule 2-2-5-d-1 Turns: Intermediate turns within each stroke shall conform to the turn rules for that stroke, except that in the freestyle turn, the swimmer must return to the breast before any kick or stroke after leaving the wall.

Backstroke Ledge

Rule 1-3-8-b. The backstroke ledge shall be adjustable to 4 centimeters above or 4 centimeters below the water level and may not be used outside of this range. The ledge shall be a minimum of 60 centimeters in length, 8 centimeters in height, and 2 centimeters at the width with 10 degrees of slope.

NCAA Championships:

NCAA Division II Men and Women (Indianapolis, IN): March 10-14, 2027

NCAA Division III Men and Women (Greensboro, NC): March 17-20, 2027

NCAA Division I Women (Austin, TX): March 17-20, 2027

NCAA Division I Men (Austin, TX): March 24-27, 2027

GL:JF

cc: NCAA Division I Swimming and Diving Rules Subcommittee
NCAA Divisions II and III Swimming and Diving Rules Committee
Selected NCAA staff