



MEMORANDUM

July 30, 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 Changes

As we approach the 2026-2027 swimming and diving season, I would like to make you aware of several rules changes. While this is technically a non-rule change year, World Aquatics and USA Swimming have made several rules changes, and it is our policy to adopt these rules whenever they occur.

The changes are listed below, and they will also be included in the revised digital version of the NCAA Swimming and Diving Rules Book, that will be released by August 15, 2026.

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>

Rules Changes:

Pool Markings

Rule 1-3.6 Commercial or nonprofit trademarks/logos are permitted on the pool bottom. Lane markers must be clearly visible.

Rule 3-1-d-4/f. Division I only. Two commercial or nonprofit trademarks/logos, (not to exceed 4 square inches) are permitted on swimsuits, uniforms, caps and apparel.

f. Swimmers shall not wear more than two (2) swim caps during competition. Swim caps shall include no more than two commercial or nonprofit trademarks/logos, (not to exceed 4 square inches) one (1) institutional logo, one (1) conference logo, and the student-athlete's name, on each side of the swim cap.

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 well.

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.

Editorial Changes:

Logos

Rule 3-1-d -4/f. Two commercial or nonprofit trademarks/logos, (not to exceed 4 square inches) are permitted on swimsuits, uniforms, caps and apparel.

f. Swimmers shall not wear more than two (2) swim caps during competition. Swim caps shall include no more than two commercial or nonprofit trademarks/logos, (not to exceed 4 square inches) one (1) institutional logo, one (1) conference logo, and the student-athlete's name, on each side of the swim cap.

The commercial or nonprofit trademark/logos is for Division I only.

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