

NFHS VIRTUAL SWIMMING 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 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), with special emphasis on risk minimization.
- Competition should be officiated by qualified personnel (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.
- All rules regarding athlete entry, participation and conduct should apply; technical rules for competition (Rule 8) should be enforced.
- The course must be the same at each site. All teams must compete in short course yards or short course meters.
- A swimmer can achieve a qualifying time during a “virtual” meet that is used for the state meet.
- State associations may permit 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.