Welcome to another season of NCAA Swimming & Diving. We begin the 3rd year of the NCAA Swimming & Diving Officials program and we are pleased with the progress over the inaugural first two years. As we continue to grow and add new members we will continued to strive to add new information that assists our officials in playing a very important role in the conduct of our sport. Included in this first newsletter of the year is very important information on all officials re-registering (required) and the new rule and editorial changes that took place during the rule making process that just concluded. You will be informed through emails of any new information during the year as well as officials are also encouraged to also visit the NCAA Swimming & Diving Playing Rules site at [http://www.ncaa.org/championships/playing-rules/swimming-and-diving-rules-game/](http://www.ncaa.org/championships/playing-rules/swimming-and-diving-rules-game/)

**NCAA OFFICIALS REGISTRATION**

All NCAA registered officials, regardless of when they took the NCAA officials test must re-register and take the new version of the rules test. All registrations become void and need to be renewed effective September 1st, 2017. The officials’ registrations are only good for the period that the rulebook is in effect – those registering or renewing will have their registration good through August 31, 2019. Officials will need to go online [https://www.usaswimming.org/utility/landing-pages/officials/ncaa-officials](https://www.usaswimming.org/utility/landing-pages/officials/ncaa-officials) to take the NCAA officials test.

Please note: Only those currently certified as Referee’s, Starters or Chief Judges by USA Swimming are eligible to take the supplemental rules test. All other officials must take the full NCAA rules test. Scores of 85% or better are required to pass the test. Questions are based upon the new version of the NCAA playing rules, effective 9/1/2017. The new test will be available in late August on the USA Swimming/NCAA officials site. You will be able to order a new rulebook (hard copy or downloadable version) from the NCAA website in late August.

**SIGNIFICANT 2017 NCAA RULES CHANGES**

The NCAA made several rule changes that go into effect on September 1, 2017. These rule changes and any editorial changes are highlighted in the rulebook. Some of the more significant changes are:

- The NCAA voted to adopt FINA Technical Swimming Rules as it pertains to the four competitive strokes, IM and relays. When there is a conflict in language; the NCAA will defer to the USA Swimming rulebook language.
- While the NCAA took the above action, several items contained in rule 2 were removed and placed in other chapters of the rulebook where the rules committee determined that they greatly differed from NCAA Swimming. One of these examples is
exiting the pool from the side. The NCAA rule remains in effect – swimmers cannot cross occupied lanes – and is no longer in chapter 2.

- Two of the more significant changes for collegiate swimming with the adoption of the FINA technical rules is now requiring the swimmer to be on the breast before initiating kicking or arm action during the freestyle of the IM (Lochte Rule). Previously the NCAA had permitted this. Also, the NCAA rule in Rule 2 has changed regarding the finish of a race – a swimmer need only touch the wall (not the pad) to finish a race. The referee should fall the guidelines of Rule 4 regarding integrating back-up times if a swimmer misses the touchpad.

- The Rulebook now reflects that it is permissible to use the starting block wedge for relays, that the wedge can be removed and replaced for individual legs of relays, but, the wedge cannot be used as the take-off point. The swimmers must take-off from the top of the RJP or starting block, not the wedge. Step-over starts are permitted as long as the take-off point is the top of the RJP or starting block.

- It is now permissible to use lighting systems (LED or Strobes) that are fully integrated to the timing system and are used to assist with verbal and hand commands to start races – especially those with Deaf or Hard of Hearing athletes involved. This system is used in addition to the required verbal and hand commands. The required commands cannot be eliminated.

- The NCAA has added religious reasons as a ground for a swimsuit waiver (in addition to medical). The waivers can only be granted by the Secretary-Rules Editor per playing Rule 3. An official must honor any written waiver issued and cannot waive the requirements of the swimsuit rule without a written waiver from the NCAA Secretary Rules Editor.

- Language has been changed regarding video reviews of relays. Those changes are:
  a. The meet committee determines whether review occurs at championships immediately after the heat involved or after the completion of all heats of a gender. This should be determined and announced prior to the first sessions of the competition.
  b. **If video is being used, all disqualifications must be reviewed to determine if the electronic judging system failed.**
  c. Only the referee has jurisdiction over the review and is the only person who makes a determination on the review. This is a judgement decision and cannot be appealed.
  d. A representative of the NCAA Sport Committee or Conference Office can view the video along with the referee as long as they do not represent an institution entered in the competition.
  e. No other official or committee member is permitted to view the video.
  f. Coaches cannot view the video during or after the review.

- The use of overhead camera’s, if recording 100 frames per second and fully integrated into the timing system is permitted as the primary back-up timing system. If the touchpad should show a discrepancy with the camera back-up, the referee can use the time from the back-up camera. Button and watch times are not used with the camera back-up system.

- The rule regarding maximum number of events for 15 and 16 event programs was changed.

- NCAA Rule 6 – Diving was changed, similar to NCAA Rule 2. The technical diving rules will also follow the FINA technical diving rules as it relates to springboard, platform and synchronized diving.

- Language was added to the rulebook reiterating that if any institution enters an athlete in any regularly contest swimming or diving event it must be contested. There is no provision for eliminating events, even if the majority of participating teams choose not to enter said events.

- Also, all events must be scored the same, even if there are less than a full field entered.

- There was a permissible option added to the rulebook allowing for 5 instead of 6 optional dives in the diving competition. However, if all participating institutions do not agree, the default program is 6 optional dives.
The NCAA Rules Making Process

How were the above rule changes enacted? The basic tenets of the process are:

- The NCAA publishes a rulebook every two years. Rule changes are generally only considered every two years unless there is a major rule change centering on a health and safety issue or one that has major financial implications on NCAA member institutions.
- The NCAA works closely with FINA, USA Swimming and National Federation of High Schools on their specific playing rules, but, does not automatically make changes when one or more of those bodies makes changes. And changes are only made during the normal rule cycle – not in mid-cycle even if the rule change will eventually be adopted.
- The rule change process begins with a call for rule changes from the membership. These submissions are combined with potential changes that come directly from the NCAA Swimming & Diving Rules Committee are compiled into a survey that is shared with the memberships. The results of this non-binding survey along with discussion at the annual CSCAA Swimming & Diving Convention are considered by the Rules Committee when they vote on changes in the spring of each rule change year. The final step is forwarding of these changes to the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP); a committee comprised of Athletic Administrators and Conference Commissioners who give final approval to rule changes that will appear in the new edition of the Swimming & Diving Playing Rules Book.
- The NCAA Swimming & Diving Secretary-Rules Editor acts on behalf of the committee in the interim to give interpretations and resolve any rules situations during the playing season.
- Until 2012, there was a single committee that dealt with both NCAA Swimming & Diving rules and the NCAA Championships. Beginning in 2012, the responsibilities were divided into two separate committees – an NCAA Championships Committee for each of the three NCAA Divisions and a single Rules Committee with representation from each Division.

The NCAA Swimming and Diving Rules Committee for 2017-18 is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Div. I</td>
<td>Petra Martin</td>
<td>Rutgers University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Div. I</td>
<td>Jamie Lindsay</td>
<td>Drexel University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Div. I</td>
<td>Currently Vacant Diving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Div. I</td>
<td>Joe Nicastro</td>
<td>Providence College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Div. II</td>
<td>Rebecca Tidwell*</td>
<td>University of Nebraska, Kearney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Div. II</td>
<td>Mary Kay Samko</td>
<td>Bentley University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Div. III</td>
<td>Peter Solomon</td>
<td>Wesleyan University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Div. III</td>
<td>Daniel Gelderloos</td>
<td>Calvin College</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRE</td>
<td>Greg Lockard</td>
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<td>NCAA</td>
<td>Ben Brownlee</td>
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*New Committee Members

Pre-Season Review Items:

The following items were shared with the NCAA membership (coaches, Athletic Directors and Conference Commissioners) in a recent email blast:

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 (6-1-3-c). Under these circumstances, diving must be eliminated from all
home competition during the current academic year, and no points will be awarded for diving events.

**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 September 1 of that academic year. 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 September 1 of that academic year. In this case, two, one-meter events shall be held as prescribed in Rule 6-1-2-a.

**Please Note:** 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 events shall be forfeited by the host institution with the visiting team being 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 (6-1-2-d).

Additionally, the choice to not 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.

**7 Days Prior to First Competition:** Deadline to seek a waiver for customization of a competitive swimsuit from the secretary-rules editor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 18</td>
<td>Pre-Championships Teleconference*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 23</td>
<td>Pre-Championships Teleconference*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 14-17</td>
<td>Division I Women’s Championship (Columbus, OH)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 14-17</td>
<td>Division II Championships (Greensboro, NC)</td>
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<td>Mar 14-17</td>
<td>Division III Championships (Indianapolis, IN)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 21-24</td>
<td>Division I Men’s Championship (Minneapolis, MN)</td>
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*Limited to NCAA or Conference Meet Referees – call in information forwarded to Conference Offices for distribution.

**Questions/Interpretations**
On September 1, 2017, Greg Lockard will assume the position of secretary-rules editor as Brian Gordon completes his two terms in the position. Any interpretation should be requested from Mr. Lockard at greg@swimdiverules.com or (973) 486-5501.