MEMORANDUM

August 1, 2017

VIA EMAIL

TO: Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Diving Coaches, Directors of Athletics, Senior Woman Administrators and Conference Commissioners.

FROM: Brian Gordon, secretary-rules editor,
NCAA Swimming and Diving Rules Committee.


As a new playing season is rapidly approaching, I would like to communicate the changes and modifications made by the NCAA Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Diving Rules Committee. The new rules book goes into effect on September 1, 2017, and will remain the playing rules book through the completion of the 2018-19 playing season. The rules book can be downloaded here and will be ready for mailing on in early September.

My terms as secretary-rules editor will conclude on August 31. Effective September 1, Greg Lockard will assume duties at the new secretary-rules editor. While I am happy to answer questions on this memorandum and the changes that are going into effect, please remember that as of September 1, 2017, all questions and requests for interpretations need to go through Mr. Lockard. His contact information is (email) greg@swimdiverules.com (email) and (973)-486-5501 (cell).

The NCAA Swimming and Diving Rules Committee made some significant rule and editorial changes to this year’s rules book edition. The following are some of the highlights for this year (all new changes are shaded in the new rulebook) as well as key dates to be aware of:

1. Rule 1 – Pool Dimensions and Equipment:
   a. Pool Markings/15-Meter Marks: Made a point of emphasis that there must be a fixed marking on any wall adjacent to the outside lane to serve as the default marking for officiating purposes. The marking on individual lane lines is not acceptable for this purpose.
   b. Track Style ledges: Added editorial clarity affirming that these ledges can be used for relays and can be removed and replaced for individual relay legs. Furthermore, clarified that these ledges cannot be the take-off point for relay legs. Swimmers must use the top of the starting block as the final take-off point for relays.

2. Rule 2 – Description of Events and Procedures:
a. **Rule Change**: Effective 9/1/2017, the NCAA will follow the technical swimming rules of FINA (and USA Swimming). This is for all four competitive strokes, Individual Medleys and Relays.

b. Individual Medley Turns: With the adoption of “a” above; the NCAA is now in line with the turns during the Individual Medley followed by FINA and USA Swimming. When swimming freestyle in the IM, a swimmer may turn in any manner desired but must have returned past vertical to the breast prior to the initiation of any kicking or arm action.

c. Lighting Systems: It is now permissible to use a lighting system (LED or Strobe Lights) in conjunction with verbal and hand signals to assist with the start of races for deaf and hard of hearing swimmers.

d. Finish: The rule has been changed to comply with FINA rules whereas the swimmer need only touch the wall to complete the race. If the swimmer fails to touch the touchpad, the officials should use the requirements of Rule 4 to integrate back-up times.

Note: Several items have been moved from Rule 2 to other parts of the rulebook to maintain the NCAA rule rather than change to the FINA rule when it pertains to conduct of the competition.

3. **Rule 3 – Uniforms and Equipment**:
   a. Swimsuit Waiver: Added language to allow requests for waivers to be submitted to the secretary-rules editor for exemption from the swimsuit rule for religious reasons. Please note the deadline for submissions under “important dates” at the end of this memorandum.

4. **Rule 4 – Officials and Their Duties**:
   a. Video Review Timing: Gives the meet committee authority to permit video review following each individual heat where a violation occurred or at the conclusion of the final heat of the gender being swum.
   b. Turn Judges: Direction given to jurisdiction turn judges when at the end of the pool and having no more than two lanes of coverage responsibility.
   c. Video Review: Made changes to the rule to require *that when video is being used for relays, all disqualifications must be reviewed*. In addition, only the referee has jurisdiction over the review and his/her decision is a judgement call that cannot be appealed. Finally, only the referee and a representative of the conference or NCAA national committee with no affiliation with an institution participating in the competition may view the video with the referee. Coaches are not permitted to view the video during or after the review process.
   d. Back-up Timing: Added to the rulebook the ability to use overhead stationary cameras recording 100 images per second and that are fully integrated into the primary electronic system as the primary back-up timing system if there is a discrepancy between the pad and the camera system.

5. **Rule 5 – Competitors, Entries, Lanes, Seeding and Qualifying Procedures**
a. Changed the entry limit for 15 or 16 event dual, double-dual, triangular or quadrangular meets to a maximum of four events, of which not more than three can be individual events.

6. Rule 6 – Diving Competition:
   **Rule Change:** Effective 9/1/2017, the NCAA will follow the technical diving rules of FINA (and USA Diving). As is the case with Rule 2 (Swimming); items were removed from Rule 6 and moved to other parts of the rulebook to maintain the NCAA rule and not be bound by the FINA diving rule as it related to administration of a competition.

7. Rule 7-Scoring:
   a. The committee reinforced in writing that in all NCAA Championship and Non-Championship meets, all swimming and diving events must be offered and contested if any of the eligible participating teams choose to enter a minimum of one eligible student-athlete in the event. Furthermore, all events must be scored identically as stated in the playing rules. It is not permissible to adjust scoring values based upon the number of participants.
   b. Diving Dual Meets: Added a scoring system for Diving only meets.

8. Rule 8 – Conduct of Competition:
   a. The committee reinforced in writing that in all NCAA Championship and Non-Championship meets, all swimming and diving events must be offered and contested if any of the eligible participating teams choose to enter a minimum of one eligible student-athlete in the event. Furthermore, all events must be scored identically as stated in the playing rules. It is not permissible to adjust scoring values based upon the number of participants.
   b. Added as a permissible option in the various event formats performing 5 optional dives, one from each category, instead of 6. The rule still requires that when mutual agreement from all participating teams is not received, the default program is six dives.

**Important Dates to Remember:**

**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, as indicated previously above, 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 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.

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cc: Mr. Greg Lockard  
NCAA Swimming and Diving Rule Committee  
Select NCAA staff