The questions below were submitted following the NCAA Swimming and Diving Pre-Championship teleconferences, Tuesday, January 23 and Thursday, January 25, 2018. As noted on the teleconferences, the answers to these questions are being distributed to all swimming and diving conference commissioners and all registered NCAA swimming and diving officials. Conference commissioners are encouraged to share this message with the referee for their conference championship meet.

Question #1
According to Rule 2-2-7-f, when automatic judging and timing equipment is used, relay swimmers must touch the pad to finish their legs of the relay. Rule 2-2-9 states that "Violations of any of the provisions in Section 2 must result in Disqualification." If an official observes that swimmer #1, #2 or #3 touches the wall, not the pad, should that the relay be disqualified? Also, although not specifically stated in the relay rules, can swimmer #4 legally finish their leg of the relay race by hitting the wall, not the touch pad?

Answer
Rule 2-2-7-f states: "When automatic judging and timing equipment is used, swimmers must touch the pads in their lanes at the end of the racing course to have finished their legs of the relay". This applies to the first three swimmers in both freestyle and medley relay events. Rule 2-4-1 states, "The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his person touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance." This applies to the final swimmer in all relays.

Question #2
What is considered a system malfunction and to what extent is the referee to determine if there was a system malfunction?

Answer
Rule 4-14-6-g states, "The referee has the ability to declare a system malfunction and not count the electronic readings of a given lane if he has clear evidence that the system has failed. If using the video review system as described in Rule 4-14-7, the referee can review any malfunction. If video review is not being utilized, the referee can elect to not count the reading of an entire heat if the majority of lanes have malfunctioned. Eliminating the readings in one heat is limited to that heat only and all other heat readings remain valid." Electronic or system power failure would be system malfunctions. If the video evidence indicates the system did not properly register the take-off, it would be considered a malfunction.

Question #3
Can a different number of lanes be used for different events during the meet?

Answer
The number of lanes used during the meet may vary for different events such as "timed final events," however, the process must be consistent for the preliminaries and finals of the event. Rule 5-7-4-b states, "Lane assignments must be done the same for all timed final events. Lane assignments must be done the same for all final events that require a preliminary qualifying heat. However, lane assignments for timed final events and events with qualifying heats (i.e. preliminaries) can be determined differently as long as each type of event is assigned consistently for the entire meet.

Question #4
When video review is being used, when does the review have to take place during preliminary heats?

Answer
Rule 4-14-7 indicates that the process should be established and announced prior to the competition by the meet committee. It is permissible to hold any video review until the completion of all heats in an event. This process shall be consistent for the duration of the meet.

Question #5
If notification of a disqualification to a coach or student-athlete cannot be made without unnecessary delay of the meet, is the disqualification nullified because notification was not provided?

Answer
Rule 4-6-1-e states, "In the case of a rules infraction resulting in disqualification, the meet referee will inform a swimmer and/or coach of a disqualification prior to the beginning of the next heat. The referee shall report the disqualification and the nature of the infraction to the head judge and/or to the head recorder and have the public address announcer announce the disqualification prior to the meet resuming to ensure no misunderstanding of the status of the heat and event."

Failure to notify a coach or athlete of a disqualification will not nullify the disqualification if a reasonable attempt to notify has been made.