



**Northwest Aquatics League  
Training and Certification**

## **Situations and Rulings for NWAL Referees**

**SITUATION:** During the 50yard backstroke (a) a backstroke flag line breaks and two swimmers stop when they make contact with the line; (b) a lane marker breaks and interferes with a swimmer. In both situations, the referee stops the event until repairs are completed and the swimmers have recovered, then re-swims the event. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** If equipment cannot be repaired in a timely manner, the team representatives should discuss alternative arrangements for completing the meet at another facility or postponing the meet until repairs can be made.

**SITUATION:** During the 100 yd IM, the referee discovers the starting block in Lane 3 has become loose and is not securely attached to the deck. The host team is unable to repair it. The referee requires all swimmers to use a deck start for the remainder of the meet. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** When one or more starting blocks are not securely attached, all swimmers should start on the deck in order to provide a uniform and equitable setting for competition. However, if the loose block had been in an outside lane, the referee could have opted to not use that lane, allowing swimmers to continue to start from the blocks in all the remaining lanes.

**SITUATION:** During the meet the referee notices clouds of muddy water pouring out of the pool's circulation jets. Within minutes, he is unable to see the markings on the bottom of the pool. The referee decides to continue the meet. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** The team representatives should discuss alternative arrangements for completing the meet at another facility or postponing the meet until the water quality can be restored.

**SITUATION:** Prior to the beginning of the meet, the visiting team representative notices that black target lines are not present on the end walls of the pool. The team representative (a) declares the pool to be non-standard and insists on moving the meet to their pool; or (b) refuses to swim unless towels are hung as targets. **RULING:** (a) End wall targets are recommended equipment only, and are not required. Therefore, their absence does not constitute a non-standard pool. (b) the referee is only required to hang towels (or other suitable markers) if the top edge of the pool lacks a contrasting color (e.g., a single row of tiles).

**SITUATION:** The clerk of course and referee mutually agree to re-seed a later heat to allow a swimmer who missed her heat to swim, but agree no to score her swim. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. Exhibition swimming is not permitted under any circumstances. **COMMENT:** A swimmer who missed a swim because of the actions of a meet official could be permitted to swim (for points) in a later heat or event at the referee's discretion.



**Northwest Aquatics League  
Training and Certification**

## **Situations and Rulings for NWAL Referees**

**SITUATION:** The referee informs a competitor that she cannot compete wearing a cap with: (a) a local USA swim club logo; (b) a college insignia or logo; (c) numbers; (d) a 2" X 3" American flag; (e) the manufacturer's logo or trademark; (f) her NWAL team's logo/mascot/name; (g) another NWAL team's logo/mascot/name. **RULING:** (a), (b), and (g) are illegal; (c), (d), (e), and (f) are legal. **COMMENT:** An illegal swim cap can be turned inside out so that the illegal insignia is not displayed to others.

**SITUATION:** A competitor is disqualified for bending over the pool edge to splash water on himself prior to the race. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** This disqualification is at the discretion of the referee. Normally, the swimmer would not be disqualified unless he interfered with another competitor as a result of splashing water on himself.

**SITUATION:** A spectator interferes with the conduct of the meet and refuses to stop. The referee suspends the meet until the meet management has removed the spectator from the premises. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

**SITUATION:** While waiting behind the blocks for a race to begin, a swimmer taunts an opponent on the basis of relative ability. **RULING:** The swimmer should be disqualified from the event for unsportsmanlike conduct. **COMMENT:** The referee could disqualify the swimmer from further competition or eject the swimmer from the premises if, in the opinion of the referee, the swimmer's conduct warrants it.

**SITUATION:** A swimmer is entered in two events – heat # 2 of breaststroke and in the butterfly event. The swimmer jumps into the water without the referee's permission: (a) during heat #4 of breaststroke, (b) during heat #1 of breaststroke, or (c) between heat #4 and heat #5 of breaststroke. **RULING:** (a) the swimmer should be disqualified from butterfly, (b) the swimmer should be disqualified from breaststroke, (c) the referee could consider this unsportsmanlike conduct and disqualify the swimmer from butterfly.

**SITUATION:** A swimmer trips and falls in the water while trying to step onto the starting platform prior to the start of an event. **RULING:** The referee should allow the swimmer to compete. **COMMENT:** Although competitors may not enter the water prior to an event, the referee may determine that disqualifying a competitor who accidentally has fallen would constitute obvious unfairness and may set aside this application of the rule.

**SITUATION:** At the conclusion of the 100 yard medley relay, the first swimmer in Lane 3 jumps into the water to congratulate the final swimmer; (a) before all teams have finished the race; (b) immediately after all teams have finished the race. **RULING:** (a) illegal; the relay team in Lane 3 is disqualified from the event; (b) possibly illegal; the



**Northwest Aquatics League  
Training and Certification**

## **Situations and Rulings for NWAL Referees**

first swimmer in Lane 3 may be disqualified from his next scheduled event for unsportsmanlike conduct at the discretion of the referee.

**SITUATION:** Just prior to the 50 yard freestyle, a swimmer cannot be located and fails to report to the blocks in time for his heat. During the heat, the missing swimmer walks on to the deck, realizes he should be swimming, and dives into his lane and starts competing. The referee disqualifies him from that event and from his next scheduled event (DQ #9, p.9). **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. A swimmer who fails to report to the starting blocks in time for the initial start is not permitted to swim, and shall be disqualified from that event. However, since the swimmer had been officially entered in the race, reported to the ready bench on time, and was therefore not scratched from the event, he cannot be disqualified from his next scheduled event.

**SITUATION:** The starter calls for the next freestyle heat to step up onto the blocks. The swimmer in Lane #2 is standing behind the timer's chair talking to another swimmer, and does not step up. The Referee immediately signals the starter that the race may begin. The swimmer in Lane # 2 then realizes that his heat is on the blocks, and quickly steps up onto his starting block. The Referee disqualifies the swimmer in Lane # 2. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. The Referee is responsible for making sure that all swimmers are in position before signaling the starter that the competition may begin. The Referee must be sure that the swimmer is actually missing before signaling the starter. He may instruct the starter to use the microphone to call for a missing lane, or he may instruct the timers in that lane to call for the missing swimmer. If the Referee prematurely signals the starter, and a missing swimmer appears at the blocks, he should permit the swimmer to compete.

**SITUATION:** The Referee notices that the swimmer in Lane #4 was not in a set position when the starter gave the starting signal, and he immediately recalls the race using his recall gun. The starter restarts the race and no false start is charged to any swimmer. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The Referee is responsible for ensuring fair starts. If the starter gives the starting signal before all swimmers have been given a chance to get into their starting (set) position, this would constitute an unfair start, and the race must be recalled. **IMPORTANT** – The Referee is expected to be in a position to see the unfair start and must have a recall device (preferably a recall gun) ready for immediate use. Being out of position, or leaving the gun in a pocket or the whistle out of one's mouth is unacceptable Referee behavior.

**SITUATION:** In a meet using dual confirmation on relay takeoffs (as instructed by the meet referee during the officials meeting), the fourth swimmer in Lane 2 of the 100 yard medley relay leaves early. Following the finish of the heat, the Referee confirms that both judges observed the violation. Before he can walk over to Lane 2, the swimmers have left the area and cannot be located. The referee proceeds with the next race, and



**Northwest Aquatics League  
Training and Certification**

## **Situations and Rulings for NWAL Referees**

informs the coach of the disqualification later. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

**COMMENT:** The referee should make a reasonable effort to inform the swimmers of their disqualification. However, unnecessary delay of the meet should be avoided.

**SITUATION:** When a coach returns home from a meet and reviews the scoresheet, he discovers that it is incorrect and actually his team won the meet. The coach calls the computer operator and asks her to correct the mistake, and change the score of the meet.

**RULING:** Incorrect procedure. The meet score can be reviewed and clerical errors corrected within 24 hours of the completion time recorded by the Meet Referee.

However, notification of the error must be made by the Team Representative to either the Meet Referee or to an NWAL Officer. The coach does not have the authority to make or to request corrections to the meet score.

**SITUATION:** Ten minutes after completion of the meet and prior to signing the scoresheet, the referee notices that a swimmer competed in the 50 free, 100 I.M., 50 back, 50 fly, and 200 Free relay (obviously using the exception report), and disqualifies him in his 4<sup>th</sup> individual event (the 50 Fly). **RULING:** Correct procedure, but incorrect ruling.

The swimmer should be disqualified in all events including the 200 free relay team.

**COMMENT:** The referee has up to 15 minutes after completion of the last event to review the scoresheet (and exception report) and make changes, except clerical, before signing the scoresheet as official.

**SITUATION:** In a meet where dual confirmation is being used, the meet referee is serving as one of the side takeoff judges. The second swimmer in the freestyle relay leaves the block early. The other takeoff judge does not notice the violation, but the referee does. The relay team is not disqualified. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

**COMMENT:** If the meet referee assigns himself to a position (other than deck referee) during part of the meet, he can only call infractions that are within his jurisdiction at that time. Because the meet referee was serving in the capacity of a takeoff judge at the time, he did not have jurisdiction to over-rule the other takeoff judge.

**SITUATION:** Swimmer A fails to show up in time for his event. The other swimmers are on the blocks, and Swimmer B false starts. While the heat is being recalled, swimmer A now appears. The referee disqualifies swimmer A, and does not permit him to swim the event, and charges swimmer B with one false start, then restarts the race. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

**COMMENT:** The referee should determine why swimmer A was absent for the initial start, if a meet official was responsible for swimmer A's absence, the Referee could permit him to swim.

**SITUATION:** A false start is called by the starter but is not confirmed by the Referee.

No false start is charged. **RULING:** Potentially incorrect procedure. The starter has the authority to call a false start, unless the Meet Referee has instructed officials in advance



**Northwest Aquatics League  
Training and Certification**

**Situations and Rulings for NWAL Referees**

to utilize a dual confirmation procedure for false starts. **COMMENT:** If dual confirmation is not being used, the Referee has the authority to overrule the starter if he has personally observed the start and does not see a violation of the starting rules. In contrast, the Referee also has the authority to recall a heat if he has personally observed a false start and the starter fails to see the infraction. The Referee is ultimately responsible for ensuring fair starts.