



MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

'High-tech' swimsuits outlawed for high school competition

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Swimming and Diving Rules Committee approved changes to Rule 3-2-2 on Tuesday, Aug. 11, that will make the high-tech swimsuit illegal for swimmers at the high school level.

Effective immediately, swimmers shall be limited to one swimsuit that shall be constructed of a woven/knit textile material, permeable to water and air, constructed so as not to aid in buoyancy, and it shall not contain zippers or other fastening systems. In addition, the suit shall be constructed so that the style/shape for males shall not extend above the waist or below the top of the kneecap and for females shall not extend beyond the shoulders or below the top of the kneecap, and it shall not cover the neck.

"These high-tech suits had fundamentally altered the sport and had become more similar to equipment rather than a uniform," said Becky Oakes, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the Swimming and Diving Rules Committee. "The rules of swimming have always prohibited the use or wearing of items that would aid in the swimmer's speed and/or buoyancy. The technical suits and styles had evolved to a point where there was little, if any, compliance with these basic rules."

The new rule will be in effect for the upcoming 2009 swimming season for girls and for the 2009-2010 swimming season for boys in Minnesota.

"These swimsuits have been a focal point of discussion and some controversy in Minnesota for about a year now," explained Lisa Lissimore, associate director of the League and meet director for both the state girls' and boys' swimming and diving meets. "The adoption of the amended rule now, prior to the start of this year's seasons, is appreciated because all coaches and athletes will know exactly what will be permitted and what won't."

The NFHS rules committee discussed the high-tech swimsuit issue at its meeting in March, but did not have enough factual information at that time to take action.

"The committee knew that in order to preserve the integrity, tradition and heritage of the sport, as well as protect and enhance the interscholastic swimming program, these new requirements were

necessary to promote fair play and the educational values of high school swimming and could not wait for another year,” Oakes said. “The immediate implementation date, including style, will help guarantee fairness in competition throughout the high school swimming seasons and allow meet officials to fairly and consistently enforce the rule.”

Following are the new swimsuit requirements and the penalties for violation of the new uniform rule:

Swimming & Diving Rule Change – 8.11.09

3-3-2 NEW

Suits worn by swimmers shall be limited to the following requirements:

- a.** only one swimsuit shall be permitted in competition. (A swimmer with special needs may request customization through his/her school to the state association.)
- b.** the swimsuit shall be:
 - 1.** constructed of a woven/knit textile material;
 - 2.** permeable (100 percent to air and water);
 - 3.** made so as not to aid in buoyancy and shall not be altered to aid in buoyancy;
 - 4.** made with no zippers or other fastening system other than a waist tie for a brief or jammer and elastic material within the casing/ribbing in the terminal ends (straps, leg openings, and waist openings); and
 - 5.** constructed so that the style/shape of the suit for males shall not extend above the waist nor below the top of the kneecap and for females shall not extend beyond the shoulders nor below the top of the kneecap, nor cover the neck.

Penalty (For ART. 2): When an official discovers a competitor wearing an illegal swimsuit by the wearing of two suits or a suit which is of an illegal construction, the official shall:

- 1.** when reporting prior to the start of the heat, notify the competitor to make legal the swimsuit before becoming eligible to compete. If the competitor cannot comply without delaying the start of the heat, the competitor is disqualified from that event and shall not be eligible for further competition until in a legal swimsuit;
- 2.** when the competitor has stepped up on the starting platform but prior to the starting device being activated, direct the competitor to “Step down,” disqualify the competitor from that event and he/she shall not be eligible for further competition until in a legal swimsuit;
- 3.** when the starting device has been activated, disqualify the competitor at the completion of the heat; nullify the competitor’s performance time and he/she shall not be eligible for further competition until in a legal swimsuit.