



NFHS Swimming and Diving Finish Rules Best Practices

Protocol

- 1. Swimmer makes initial contact with the touchpad first:**
 - a. There is no indication of a touchpad malfunction – time is final;
 - b. There is indication of a touchpad malfunction;
 - (1) semi-automatic times take precedent (6-4-1a);
 - (2) if semi-automatic times are not available, manual times are utilized to determine final time (6-4-1b)
- 2. Swimmer makes initial contact with the end wall first (other than the touchpad), and then contacts the touchpad:**
 - a. the initial point of contact with the wall determines the final time; since contact with the touchpad occurs after contact with the wall, the touchpad time is not considered;
 - b. semi-automatic times take precedent (6-4-1a). If other information supports the legitimacy of the human generated time (order of finish, times in other lanes, etc.), that is the official time;
 - c. If semi-automatic times are not available, manual times are utilized to determine final time (6-4-1b). If other information supports the legitimacy of the human generated time (order of finish, times in other lanes, etc.), that is the official time.
- 3. Swimmer touches the end wall and not the touchpad:**
 - a. the initial point of contact with the wall determines the final time;
 - b. semi-automatic times take precedent (6-4-1a). If other information supports the legitimacy of the human generated time (order of finish, times in other lanes, etc.), that is the official time;
 - c. if semi-automatic times are not available, manual times are utilized to determine final time (6-4-1b). If other information supports the legitimacy of the human generated time (order of finish, times in other lanes, etc.), that is the official time.

Instructions for Officials

- NFHS Rule 1-1-1 states that the end walls are the walls perpendicular to the race course. For the purposes of determining the finish, the wall is interpreted as the vertical portion of the pool, contiguous surfaces of the deck and overflow gutter, the front portion of the starting block or platform, or the touchpad at the end of the course. The wall does not include those spaces on the side of the blocks or the open space of the gutter.

- NFHS Rule 6-3-2 states: When recorded by a properly operating automatic timing and judging system, the pad time shall be the official time (computed to the hundredth) and the order of finish shall be determined by integration of those times. This refers to when the swimmer makes initial contact with the touchpad at the end of the race. In cases where initial contact is made by touching some other portion end wall, even if a touchpad is present, the result achieved by that legal touch must be regarded as the "official" time for the event.
- The NFHS highly recommends that officials should prepare a written record of the order in which lanes finish in each race. Fulfilling the expectations of 4-2-2n (determining if there is a need to use backup times) could encompass use of such a place pick.
- The meet referee is the head official and is responsible for making decisions on matters not specifically covered by the rules and can order that a race be re-swum when there is obvious unfairness, such as a lane line malfunction or a power outage. In the case of a timing malfunction, or in the case of a competitor who initially contacts the end wall and not the touchpad, the referee is expected to utilize other information or data such as his/her order of finish, times on other lanes, etc., to verify the single data point (watch/button) is accurate. Comparison of times reported with other times achieved in other lanes in the same heat, looking at place pick and relative order of finish, etc., are all things that the referee can do to provide some minimal level of assurance that human-involved timing results bear a substantial relationship to reality. Referees have the authority to reject times that are clearly inaccurate and to determine placing without assigning a specific time to a swimmer.
- The referee needs to understand his/her tools that are available to determine the final time: order of finish, touchpad, button, watch. The referee has the authority to disregard the watch time if he/she has other data points to determine order of finish. The place picks of experienced human officials may be more reliable than watch times by student timers.

Instructions for Timers

- Timers must press button and stop the watch at the first point of contact by the swimmer with any structural portion of the pool at the end wall, whether or not touchpads are being used.
- Stress the importance of the timer stopping the button/watch at the first point of contact, and not whether the swimmer touches the pad. Timers must be instructed that their time may end up serving as the official time.
- Timers should be instructed to report when a swimmer makes initial contact with the end wall but not the touchpad.
- The wall is interpreted as the vertical portion of the pool, contiguous surfaces of the deck and overflow gutter, the front portion of the starting block or platform, or the touchpad at the end of the course. The wall does not include those spaces on the side of the blocks or the open space of the gutter.