

## MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

### SUPPLEMENTAL RULES FOR SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING – 2024-2025

The following Rules I-VII replace Rules I-X of PART THREE (USAAS Tech Rules 2021), pages 1-59, in the 2021 USAAS Rule Book. The section of the 2021 USAAS Rule Book beginning with PART FOUR (Figure Rules 2021), pages 1-62, will remain intact and will be used as is for League competition. All other sections of the 2021 USAAS Rule Book are not applicable to League competition.

#### DUAL MEET COMPETITION

##### RULE I GENERAL REGULATIONS

###### A. General Pre-Competition Responsibilities of Schools Hosting Meets

The school hosting the competition is responsible for meeting the following requirements:

1. Providing a pool having an area of at least 25 x 35 feet and not less than 9 feet in depth.
2. Having available (upon request) entry information which includes information regarding:
  - a. Pool dimensions with specific reference to the depth of the water, water level below deck, position of diving boards, ladders, and a cross-section drawing of the pool.
  - b. Markings on bottoms and sides of pool.
  - c. Type of lighting.
  - d. Position of audience with reference to the pool.
  - e. Open space for entrance and exit.
  - f. Type of sound equipment available.
3. Providing adequate markings on bottom and/or sides of pool for Figure Competition.
4. Providing equipment for the reproduction of accompaniment including an underwater speaker.

###### B. General Regulations

###### 1. Forms of Competition

- a. The meet schedule shall be divided into two halves. The first half will be figure meets (see Rule III); the second half will be routine meets (see Rule IV).

**b. Alternates: do not need to be named until they need to be used in any given routine.**

###### 2. Competitor Entries and Responsibilities

Competitors shall inform themselves of the time of starting, shall be prompt at the starting point of each event in which they enter and shall be personally responsible for reporting to the Clerk-of-Course in time to compete in the order of the drawing. Failure to do so constitutes reason for immediate disqualification by the Referee. In figure competition, late arrivals may compete immediately following the last competitor in the draw and shall be penalized in accordance with Rule VII, A.2.

##### RULE II OFFICIALS AND DUTIES

###### A. The officials shall consist of the following:

1. Meet Manager
2. Scorers
3. Referee
4. Assistant Referee
5. Competition Judges
6. Sound Center Manager (Routine Competition)
7. Timers (Routine Competition)
8. Announcers
9. Computer Operators
10. Runners (Routine Competition)
11. Clerk of Course (Figure Competition)

###### B. Duties of the Meet Manager

1. Responsible for all pre-meet requirements.
2. Shall verify that all officials are eligible and meet the MN State High School League requirements by seeing a valid copy of their MSHSL credentials for synchronized swimming from their Arbiter profile page.
3. Shall assign each official his/her particular duty, being certain that each assigned official understands his/her responsibility as indicated by the rules. S/he shall have the authority to change any assignments of duty.
4. In emergencies, the Meet Manager is authorized to assign alternate judges from the accredited list.
5. The competitive area (to be defined by the meet manager) shall be kept clear of coaches, teammates, and all but working personnel (judges, scorers, etc.) while a routine is in progress.

###### C. Duties of the Scorers

To individually record the scores and make the necessary computations as directed in Rule VI. The written score and computer computations shall be the official score.

**D. Selection of Judges and Referee**

1. Eligible judges are those with the appropriate MN State High School rating for that meet. Judges shall, upon arrival at the meet, present a printed copy or copy on their phone, of their MSHSL credentials for synchronized swimming from their Arbiter profile page.
2. Under no circumstances shall an ineligible judge be seated.  
Exception: When registered officials are not available for a contest, the MSHSL Board of Directors may, in case of emergency, grant any member school a limited number of waivers. (MSHSL Official Handbook, Bylaw 413).
3. Where possible the panel should include:
  - a. no immediate relative and/or coach of a competitor in the specific event.
  - b. no more than one judge per school on a specific panel.
4. A judge shall be considered unaffiliated with a school after a one-year period of no contact with the team, whether as a coach (paid or volunteer), or 3 years after competing as a swimmer.
5. A minimum of 3 judges are used in Competition. If more judges are available, it is recommended that schools use 5 or 7.

**E. Duties of the Referee**

1. The Referee shall have full jurisdiction over the event, shall enforce all rules and decisions of the League and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the competition, the final settlement of which is not otherwise assigned by said rules.
2. The Referee shall penalize competitor(s) for any violations of the rules and shall inform the coach and the competitor of the infraction before the completion of the meet.
3. The Referee shall have the authority to interfere in a competition at any stage to ensure that the rules are observed, and shall have the power to call off or postpone to a future date, any event even though the same has started, if in his/her judgment the competition cannot be conducted or completed in a satisfactory manner and in fairness to the competitors. At the discretion of the governing committee which postponed events can be conducted (between the competitors who reported on the first date) at a future date as though the competition had never started.
4. Ascertain that all judges are in place and their needs are tended to as necessary.

**F. Duties of the Assistant Referee**

1. Obtain an order of draw and ascertain that the competitors are in readiness one routine proceeding their competitive turn.
  - a. Ascertain that the number and names listed for Teams are the same as those who swim.
  - b. Ascertain whether an alternate is to replace another listed competitor.
  - c. Notify the Referee of any variations from the entry.
2. Keep order on the deck during competition.
3. Carry out any further duties as assigned by the Referee.

**G. Judges**

1. Judges of Routine Competition shall be provided with runners.
2. Judges of Figure Competition shall be placed, when possible, in elevated positions in such locations as to have a profile view of the competitors.
3. Judges of Routine Competition shall be placed in elevated positions when possible on more than one side of the pool.
4. Each Judge shall be provided with a means of recording and a visible signaling of scores.
5. No Judge shall communicate with another individual while a competitor(s) is performing.
6. In Routine Competition, at the completion of each routine, each of the Judges shall record the Execution, Artistic Impression, and Difficulty scores and shall hand the recorded scores to a Runner. When the Referee has determined that each of the Runners has received the recorded scores, the Referee shall then signal for the simultaneous flashing or reading of first the Execution scores, then the Artistic Impression scores, and then the Difficulty scores.
7. When judging an event, a judge shall have in his/her possession only those papers approved by the Referee.
8. Judges once seated may not leave their positions without the Referee's approval.
9. When a pre-swimmer is available, judges may not assemble following the pre-swim to discuss the routine or figure scores awarded.

**H. Officials Uniform**

At competitions, officials shall wear a black top and black bottoms.

**I. The Sound Center Manager:**

1. Will playback recorded music for the accompaniment for each routine during the assigned practices and in the competition.
2. Will maintain sound levels so that no listener is subjected to sound levels that exceed 90 decibels continuous sound, or the sound level safety tolerances as published by OSHA, whichever is lesser.

**J. The Timers:**

(Routine Competition) shall check the overall time of the routine as well as that of the deck movements. Three times must be taken for deck work and three times must be taken for the overall routine. The deck and total routine times shall be recorded on the Master Score Sheet. If the time of two watches agree, that time shall be the official time. Should the times of all three watches differ; the intermediate time shall be the official time. When the time of either the overall routine or the deck movements is in excess of the limit, a Timer shall inform the Referee. (See Rule VII, B.1.a. & b.).

**K. The Announcers:**

Shall make only such announcements as are authorized by the Meet Manager or Referee. In Routine Competition, they shall announce the number of the competitor. In Figure Competition, they shall announce the number of the competitor and the name of the figure to be performed. The Judges' awards shall be announced in sequence in both Figure and Routine Competition. In Routine Competition, after the scores have been given, the name(s) and affiliation of the competitor(s) may be announced.

**L. Computer Operators:**

Shall provide data entry and assist with the scoring process as needed by the Meet Manager.

- M. **The Runners:**  
Shall deliver score forms as directed by the Referee.
- N. **The Clerk of Course:**  
Shall obtain the order of draw and ascertain that all competitors are in readiness. Failure of a competitor to report to the Clerk of Course at the starting time shall be reported immediately to the Referee.

### RULE III FIGURE COMPETITION RULES

- A. Each competitor shall be tested only once in Figure Competition.
- B.** All competitors shall wear only one-piece black suit/s, devoid of school emblems. All competitors wearing swim caps must wear a plain white cap devoid of school emblem. **Jewelry shall not be worn. Medical alert and religious medals are not considered jewelry. Studs are allowed.**
- C. Figures shall be performed in the order listed in the figure group unless otherwise designated in rules for more than one set of judges.
- D.** Figure Competition shall consist of four figures. These figures are:
- **311 Kip** ..... **1.6**
  - 301 Barracuda ..... **1.8**
  - **363 Water Drop** ..... **1.8**
  - 360 Walkover, Front ..... 1.9
- E. Each competitor must have two (2) typewritten entry sheets for dual meets and four (4) typewritten entry sheets for triangular meets. Entry sheets are due to the Meet Manager immediately upon arrival at the host school (at least one-half hour before the meet). Schools may agree to use the computer scoring system instead of using entry sheets.
- F. Each school may enter any number of competitors.
- G. Order of swim shall be determined by random draw.
- H. Competitors' scores are ranked from highest to lowest. Points are awarded to the top seven competitors:
- |               |               |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1st place - 8 | 2nd place - 6 | 3rd place - 5 | 4th place - 4 |
| 5th place - 3 | 6th place - 2 | 7th place - 1 |               |
- In the event of a tie, the points awarded for that place and the place after it are added together, divided by two, and each competitor is awarded that score.
- The winner is the school with the greatest number of accumulated Varsity points.
- I. Performance of the figure shall begin on a signal from the Referee.
- J. If the competitor does not understand the name of the announced figure, the competitor must ask the Referee for a repeat announcement before actually beginning the figure (see Rule VII, A.1.c. & d.). Failure of the competitor to understand the announced figure shall not be sufficient reason for claiming a balk or false start.

### RULE IV ROUTINE COMPETITION RULES

- A. Routines may consist of any figures, swimming propulsion techniques, strokes or part thereof.
- B. For the deck movements in team routines, competitors may not execute stacks, towers, or human pyramids.
- C.** All competitors shall wear a one-piece swimsuit devoid of school emblems. All competitors wearing swim caps must wear a plain white cap devoid of school emblems. **Jewelry shall not be worn. Medical alert and religious medals are not considered jewelry. Studs are allowed.**
- D. Each routine must have two (2) typewritten entry sheets for dual meets and four (4) typewritten entry sheets for triangular meets. Entry sheets are due to the Meet Manager immediately upon arrival at the host school (at least one-half hour before the meet). Schools may agree to use the computer scoring system instead of using entry sheets.
- E. Each school may enter six (6) routines: one (1) team routine, with the remaining five (5) routines being distributed among solos, duets and trios with no more than two (2) entries per event.
- F. A competitor may enter three (3) events. If she does, one (1) must be the team event.
- G. A competitor may not enter the same event in both Varsity and Junior Varsity competition.
- H. A team shall consist of at least four (4) but no more than eight (8) competitors.

- I. In the case of team competition, one-quarter point shall be added to the Total Score (see Rule VI, C.3., NOTE) for each additional competitor over four (4) on a team.
- J. The coach shall be responsible for presenting their accompaniment to the sound center. Each routine shall be identified with the name of competitor(s), school, number in order of performance, and any special instructions.
- K. The accompaniment shall begin on a signal from the Referee. Routines must start and finish with the accompaniment. The competitor(s) must perform the routine without interruption.
- L. Judging of routines begins with entry into water. If a routine starts in the water, judging commences with the accompaniment.
- M. Time requirements for routines shall be as follows:
  1. There shall be a maximum of 10 seconds for deck movements.
  2. Maximum time limits are:
    - Solos – 2:30 minutes
    - Duets/Trios – 2:45 minutes
    - Teams – 3:45 minutes
  3. There shall be an allowance of 15 seconds plus the allotted time limit.
  4. There shall be no minimum time limits.
  5. Timing of the routine shall begin and end with the accompaniment. Timing of deck movements shall end as the last competitor leaves the deck. (See Rule VII, B.1. a. & b.)
- N. Other Requirements:
  1. The routine must end in the water.
  2. There shall be no deliberate use of the bottom of the pool.
  3. There shall be no deliberate contact with the deck after the swimmers have entered the water. The deck shall be defined as any surface perpendicular to the sides of the pool, excluding the bottom.
  4. There shall be no deliberate use of the bottom of the pool to assist another swimmer(s). (See Rule VII, B.2. a.)
  5. There shall be no diving into the shallow end of a pool when the pool depth is less than 5 feet.
- O.** **Alternates: A competitor does not need to be listed as an alternate in order to swim in any given routine (Rule I, B., 1., b.)** If the alternate swims, the event shall be counted as one of the three permitted for that competitor.
- P. Interrupted routines shall swim no more than two routines after their original draw.
- Q. Visiting and host schools will alternate positions, with the host school swimming last.
- R. Routine scores are ranked from highest to lowest. Points are awarded as follows:
  - Teams - 10 for first, 2 for second.
  - Duets/Trios - 7 for first, 4 for second, 2 for third.
  - Solos - 5 for first, 3 for second, 1 for third.

The winner is the school with the greatest number of accumulated Varsity points.

## RULE V METHODS OF GRADING

### (Judges' Responsibilities)

- A. **Figure Competition**
  1. Judges shall award scores from 0-10, using one-tenth point increments. All judgments are made from a standpoint of perfection.
  2. Judging begins on a signal from the Panel Referee.
  3. The Judges' scores shall be flashed simultaneously and announced immediately after each figure on signal from the Panel Referee.
  4. In the event of a balk or false start, the Judges shall not take this into consideration, but shall grade the final performed figure as though there had been no balk. The Panel Referee will instruct the Scorer to record the appropriate penalty. (See Rule VII, A.1.c.)
  5. Fundamental Criteria of Figure Execution:
    - a. Figures should be executed with each section (transition) clearly defined in pattern and body position (Design) and high, controlled and in uniform motion and tempo (Control), unless otherwise specified in the descriptions. Only the transition(s), or portions thereof, for which exceptional tempos are defined shall be performed at the specified tempos, all others continuing at the "normal" uniform tempo.
    - b. **Design: 5 points.**  
Consider the accuracy of positions and transitions as specified in the figure description.
    - c. **Control: 5 points.**  
Consider extension, height, stability, clarity and uniform motion, unless otherwise specified in the figure description.

- d. **Extension:** Legs, feet, torso, and neck should be fully extended, unless otherwise specified.
- e. **Traveling:** Figures shall be performed in a relatively stationary position, except for movement specified in the descriptions.
- d. **Water Level and Lines:** Water levels should remain constant during a transition, except where otherwise specified.
- e. **Simultaneous and Concurrent Action within Transitions:** All movements specified within a transition should begin simultaneously from the specified starting position and be completed simultaneously with the achievement of the specified final position and water level.
- f. **Maximum Height:** Maximum height is desirable at all times, unless otherwise specified. Height is evaluated based on the water level of the body part(s).
- g. **Minimal Extraneous Movement:** Movements beyond those prescribed in the descriptions should be minimal.

6. **Figure Scoring:**

Perfect.....	10.0
Near Perfect .....	9.5 to 9.9
Excellent.....	9.0 to 9.4
Very Good .....	8.0 to 8.9
Good .....	7.0 to 7.9
Competent.....	6.0 to 6.9
Satisfactory.....	5.0 to 5.9
Deficient .....	4.0 to 4.9
Weak .....	3.0 to 3.9
Very Weak.....	2.0 to 2.9
Hardly Recognizable.....	0.1 to 1.9
Completely Failed .....	0

Note: Minor infractions shall not be judged zero.

B. **Routine Competition**

1. **Judges Awards**

Judges shall award scores from 0 - 10, with one-tenth point increments for execution, artistic impression, and difficulty. All judgments are made from a standpoint of perfection.

2. Judging of the routine begins with the entry into the water. If a routine starts in the water, judging begins with the accompaniment.

3. At the completion of each routine, each of the Judges shall record the execution, artistic impression, and difficulty scores on paper and shall hand this to a Runner. When the Referee determines that all Runners have received their scores, the Referee may signal for the execution scores to be flashed simultaneously or read by the announcer. Upon a second signal from the Referee, the artistic impression scores may be flashed simultaneously or read by the announcer. Upon a third signal from the Referee, the difficulty scores may be flashed simultaneously or read by the announcer.

An alternate scoring method may be used. When the referee determines that all runners have received the scores, the referee shall signal for the start of the next routine. Scores from routine #1 shall be read upon completion of routine #2 and the swimmer(s) shall be introduced at that time. This procedure shall be followed throughout the event.

4. **Routine Scoring**

**EXECUTION**

Execution judges shall award one score for Execution and Synchronization. The Execution score shall be weighted 30% of the Total Routine Score.

	<i>Solo</i>	<i>Duet/Trio/Team</i>
<b>Execution</b> – the level of excellence in performing highly specialized skills. Execution of all movements.	90%	50%

<b>Synchronization</b> – the precision of movements in unison, one with the other, and the accompaniment above, at and below the surface. Synchronization of timing of one with another and with the music.	10%	50%
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**ARTISTIC IMPRESSION**

Artistic Impression judges shall award 1 score for Choreography, Music Interpretation and Manner of Presentation. The Artistic Impression score shall be weighted 40% of the Total Routine Score.

	<i>Solo</i>	<i>Duet/Trio/Team</i>
<b>Choreography</b> – the creative skill composing a routine that combines artistic and technical elements. The design and weaving together of variety and creativity of all movements.		
<b>Music Interpretation</b> – expressing the mood of the music, use of the music's structure.	100%	100%

**Manner of Presentation** – the manner which the competitor(s) present(s) the routine to the viewers. The total command of the performance of the routine.

#### **DIFFICULTY**

Difficulty judges shall award a score for Difficulty. The Difficulty score shall be weighted 30% of the Total Routine Score.

	<i>Solo</i>	<i>Duet/Trio/Team</i>
<b><u>Difficulty</u></b> – the quality of being hard to achieve. Difficulty of all movements and of synchronization.	100%	100%

#### 5. **Routine Scoring**

Perfect.....	10.0
Near Perfect .....	9.5 to 9.9
Excellent.....	9.0 to 9.4
Very Good .....	8.0 to 8.9
Good .....	7.0 to 7.9
Competent.....	6.0 to 6.9
Satisfactory.....	5.0 to 5.9
Deficient .....	4.0 to 4.9
Weak.....	3.0 to 3.9
Very Weak.....	2.0 to 2.9
Hardly Recognizable.....	0.1 to 1.9
Completely Failed .....	0

### **RULE VI METHODS OF SCORING**

#### **(Scorers' Responsibilities)**

#### A. **Total Score**

- For Figure Competition, the total score shall be the sum of the score of the four figures less the Referee's penalties. (See Rule VI, B.)
- For Routine Competition, the total score shall be the sum of the scores for execution, artistic impression, difficulty and the team bonus points, if any, less the Referee's penalties.

#### B. **Figure Competition**

- Record the individual scores, each time in the same consecutive order in the computer program and on the score sheets.
- If nine judges are used, cancel the two highest and two lowest scores. If five or seven judges are used, cancel only the one highest and one lowest score. If three judges are used, there shall be no cancellation.
- If nine or seven judges are used, add the remaining five scores. Then divide the sum by five and multiply the result by the degree of difficulty. If five or three judges are used, add the remaining three scores. Then divide the sum by three and multiply the result by the degree of difficulty.

Rounding Rule: Five and above the 4th place, increases the third place by one. The third decimal place remains the same for numbers less than five.

- Add the scores for the individual figures for each competitor. This is the total figure score for the competitor.
- The sum of the four figures shall be divided by the total of the degree of difficulty of the group and multiplied by ten, this is the total normalized figure score and then the penalties shall be deducted.
- Error in Results: If an error has been made and is discovered after the results are published, the computation shall be redone, results reproduced correctly. The results shall become final 24 hours after the home meet coach sends the away coach(s) the meet results spreadsheet.

#### C. **Routine Competition**

- Record the individual scores, each time in the same consecutive order in the computer program and/or on a score sheet.
- For each panel, Execution, Artistic Impression and Difficulty, the score shall be calculated as follows for each category:
  - If a panel consists of 7 or 5 judges, the highest and the lowest scores for each panel are cancelled (one high, one low). If a panel consists of 3 judges, no scores are cancelled.
  - The Execution score is the sum of the remaining scores in the category, divided by the number of judges less 2 and multiplied by 3.
  - The Artistic Impression score is the sum of the remaining scores in the category, divided by the number of judges less 2 and multiplied by 4.
  - The Difficulty score is the sum of the remaining scores in the category, divided by the number of judges less 2 and multiplied by 3.
- The Final routine score shall be the sum of the Execution score (30%), the Artistic Impression score (40%) and the Difficulty score (30%), plus team Bonus Points, if any, less any penalty deductions.

Bonus Points: In the case of team competition, one-quarter point shall be added for each additional competitor over four on a team.

4. Error in Results: If an error has been made and is discovered after the results are published, the computation shall be redone, results reproduced correctly. The results shall become final 24 hours after the home meet coach sends the away coach(s) the meet results spreadsheet.

## RULE VII REFEREE'S PENALTIES

### A. Figure Competition

1. **One-Point Penalties** shall be given to a competitor who:
  - a. In the opinion of the Panel Referee, takes a standard swimming stroke to initiate the execution of a figure.
  - b. In the opinion of the Panel Referee, performed an incorrect sequence, or sequence other than described in the Handbook, of the listed figure.
  - c. Makes a balk, false start or otherwise fails to complete a figure which has been stated.
    - (1) The competitor shall be allowed a second attempt.
    - (2) The Panel Referee shall have the figure re-announced and instruct the scorers to deduct one point from that figure.
  - d. Executes a figure other than the listed figure announced.
    - (1) The competitor shall be allowed a second attempt.
    - (2) The Panel Referee shall have the figure re-announced and instruct the scorers to deduct one point from that figure.
2. **Two-Point Penalties:** A competitor that competes out of order of draw shall be given a penalty of two points deducted from the Total Figure Score, except for unusual circumstances as determined by the Panel Referee.
3. **Failed Figure:**
  - a. If a competitor again performs a figure other than the listed figure, then the Panel Referee shall rule it a failed figure and shall not call for the judges' scores. This removes the one-point penalty and a zero (0) is recorded for the figure.
  - b. The Panel Referee is authorized to have a failed figure repeated without penalty when the execution of the figure was influenced by exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the competitor.
  - c. Exceptional circumstances include only the most unusual happenings, and do not include the loss of swimwear or swimming aid.

### B. Routine Competition

1. **One-Point Penalty** shall be deducted from the routine score if:
  - a. The time limit of 10 seconds for deck movements is exceeded.
  - b. The specified time limit for a routine is exceeded. (Rule IV, M.2.).
  - c. A competitor has made deliberate use of the bottom of the pool during the routine.
2. **Two-Point Penalties** shall be deducted from the routine score if:
  - a. A competitor has made deliberate use of the bottom of the pool during a routine to assist another competitor.
  - b. A routine is interrupted by a competitor during the deck movements and a new start is allowed. (If of technical nature, no penalty.)
  - c. During deck movements in a routine, competitors are executing stacks, towers or human pyramids.
  - d. A competitor has deliberate contact with the pool deck during a routine.
  - e. A competitor competes out of the order of draw, except for unusual circumstances, as determined by the Referee.
3. **Disqualification:**
  - a. Failure to complete the routine after entering the water, unless caused by circumstances beyond the control of the competitor. Loss of swimwear or swimming aid is considered the responsibility of the competitor.
  - b. Failure to notify the Meet Manager and/or the Event Referee of all changes or scratches, before swimming, will result in the disqualification of the routine.
  - c. A team shall consist of at least four (4) but not more than eight (8) competitors.

### Addendum: Section and State Routine Time Limits:

	<b><i>Solo</i></b>	<b><i>Duet/Trio</i></b>	<b><i>Team</i></b>
<b>Short</b>	2 min	2 min 15 sec	2 min 45 sec
<b>Long</b>	2 min 15 sec	2 min 30 sec	3 min 15 sec
<b>Extended</b>	2 min 30 sec	2 min 45 sec	3 min 45 sec