

June 9, 2011

Dear team reps, coaches, starters and referees,

A point of clarification of procedures apparently needs to be made and explained to everyone officiating or running a CCAA meet. This includes coaches and starters.

The issue is the all-too-common practice of combining free relays at the end of the meet.

First, this is NOT provided for in the rules. In the CCAA Rules, Rule 2 on page 2 under the heading of FREESTYLE RELAYS each event is listed as being competed in the order of “girls THEN boys,” NOT girls and boys together.

Second, these are competitive meets. Trying to judge four relay teams in the water at the same time and get the relay takeoffs and frequently close finishes correct is much more difficult and promotes incorrect results.

Third, there are circumstances where this may be allowed, but it is the MEET OFFICIAL’S decision, not the coaches’ or the starter’s decision. The coaches may request that the meet official consider this option, but it is not to be assumed that combining relays will be allowed. The Meet Official is there to make sure that a fair and equally competitive balance is achieved with equal opportunity for all swimmers.

It is absolutely inappropriate for the home team’s starter to speak with the two coaches without the meet official’s knowledge, and then TELL the official, “I have discussed with the two coaches and we are going to combine the free relays,” as occurred already this week.

Part of the reason that the VISITING team gets to provide the meet official is to take away some of the HOME team advantages and decrease the chance that the home team dictates the progress/format of meet to the visiting team, i.e. their guest.

Some circumstances where the relays may be combined are as follows:

- At the end of the individual medleys, before the onset of the free relays, one team is ahead by 71 points or more. In that event, the outcome of the meet is decided and the trailing team cannot come from behind and win.
- One team has several gaps in the relays with no relay team entered. This is more common with some of our smaller teams. It is acceptable to put both genders of the same age group in the pool at once. For instance, if team A has no 11-12 girls relay and no 11-12 boys relay, it is reasonable to put team B’s 11-12 girls and 11-12 boys teams in the pool at the same time. The same if team A has no girls team and team B has no boys team. Two teams in the water of comparable age of different sexes is acceptable. This can occur regardless of who is ahead.

- Any scenario that puts four competing teams in the water at the same time while the meet outcome is not decided is unacceptable. Once the outcome is decided, it becomes acceptable to combine relays, but is always up to the discretion of the Meet Official.

I hope this clarifies the league's intent on how this matter is to be best handled. Please ensure that all team reps, coaches, starters and officials read this letter.

For the board,

Chris Accetta
CCAA president.