

TISCA Policies, Procedures, & Programs

updated February 2025

High school swimming & diving in Tennessee is governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and the by-laws of the Tennessee Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association (TISCA). This document compiles policies, procedures, and programs established by the TISCA membership. Additions and changes to the policies contained here may be made at the spring Annual Meeting by proposal passed by majority vote, in accordance with the TISCA by-laws. Proposals regarding policies, procedures, and programs (ie, legislative proposals) should be submitted to the TISCA president at least twenty-one (21) days prior to the Annual Meeting.

Contents:	I. Registration
	II. Eligibility
	III. State Meet
	IV. Bona Fide Competition
	V. Awards Programs
	VI. Approved Expenses

I. Registration

TISCA registration is conducted online via the TISCA website. To register, teams (including unattached homeschool athletes) must submit

- (1) a completed registration form, including a team roster, and
- (2) membership dues, paid by check to TISCA.

Registration is due by November 1. Membership dues are \$85 per team if paid by November 1; late registration requires a membership fee of \$110 (ie, the standard fee plus a \$25 penalty). Full instructions for completion of the registration form and the payment of dues will be posted on the TISCA website.

Note: As stipulated by Article III.1.3 of the TISCA by-laws, registration, with applicable fees, will be accepted until the entry deadline for the state championship meet. Restrictions on participation at the State Meet may be imposed on teams who fail to register with TISCA by the meet entry deadline.

Note: Teams with outstanding proof-of-time fees may not register with TISCA. All outstanding fees must be paid for a team to be deemed in good standing and eligible for membership. Questions about fees and standing should be directed to the TISCA Membership chair.

Note: At the time of registration, coaches will be asked to verify that they have completed the safety courses mandated by Tennessee state law for youth athletic coaches. See section II. A. below for details on the required courses.

II. Eligibility

A. COACHES

To be eligible for deck access at the State Meet, coaches must complete the safety courses mandated by Tennessee state law for youth athletic coaches (TN Code § 49-6-3601):

1. concussion recognition and head injury safety education program (provided by NFHS),
2. sudden cardiac arrest education program (provided by NFHS),
3. training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and in the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs).

Coaches are required to retain documentation that all members of their coaching staff have completed the mandated courses. Documentation should not be submitted to TISCA, but coaches must be able to produce documentation if asked.

B. ATHLETES

Note: TISCA follows the athlete eligibility by-laws established by the TSSAA, with the exceptions and clarifications detailed in Article VII of the TISCA by-laws. TSSAA eligibility rules may be found in Article II of the TSSAA Handbook. The rules cover a wide range of topics, including student enrollment, academic progress, tuition & financial aid, and more. The following bear explicit mention here:

- No student shall be eligible to participate in athletics after he/she has graduated from a secondary school (TSSAA Article II, Section 5).
- No student shall be eligible to participate in any athletic contest during any school year if he/she becomes 19 years of age on or before August 1 (TSSAA Article II, Section 9).

Note – Rules Interpretation: As stated in Article VII.1.5 of the TISCA by-laws, a student may not participate in TISCA swimming and diving for more than four seasons after entering the 9th grade level. TISCA recognizes that there are many reasons why a student might require more than four years to complete high school after starting 9th grade. A student might take time away from school, or, in the most common cases, a student might repeat a high-school grade. Per TISCA by-laws, a student's eligibility is not limited to the four consecutive years after he/she enters 9th grade. Rather, a student is only limited to four seasons of high school swimming & diving (with the additional rules noted above, that a student may not compete after graduating and may not compete during any school year if he/she becomes 19 years of age on or before August 1). Thus, a student may "sit out" of a swimming and diving season after entering 9th grade and preserve his/her eligibility for a later year. However, note that Article VII.1.5 stipulates that a student who has participated in at least one high school meet shall be regarded as having swum one season and having exhausted one season of eligibility.

In the exceptional case that an athlete is "sitting out" a season in order to preserve a season of eligibility, that athlete must observe the following:

- the athlete may participate in team practices;
- the athlete may participate in regular-season meets IF declared exhibition;
- the athlete may NOT score points for his/her team in any way;
- the athlete may NOT participate in championship-level meets.

Note: TISCA by-laws concerning the eligibility of transfer students may be found in Article VII.3-4. TISCA by-laws concerning the eligibility of home school students, including public virtual school students, may be found in Article VIII.

III. State Meet

The State Meet invitation will be posted to the TISCA website no less than 30 days prior to the start of the State Meet.

RULES: Current NFHS Rules govern the conduct of the state championship meet, except as modified by the TISCA Constitution and Bylaws, TISCA policies, or the Meet Invitation.

FORMAT: The state championship meet is a prelims/finals competition for swimming and prelims/semi-final/final competition for diving. The top sixteen swimmers and divers return in the evening for finals, with championship and consolation heats for all swimming events. The normal high school swimming order of events is followed, with women's events preceding men's events. Events from the 200-yard medley relay through the 100-yard butterfly are contested on the first day. Events from the 100-yard freestyle through the 400-yard freestyle relay are contested on the second day. In even numbered years, girls will dive on Friday and boys will dive on Saturday; in odd numbered years, boys will dive on Friday and girls will dive on Saturday.

ELIGIBILITY: The meet is open to current TISCA member teams and athletes in good standing. All home school unattached swimmers must be registered with TISCA for the current season. No meet entries will be accepted from a team or unattached home school athlete unless current TISCA membership registration has been accepted and current dues have been paid. Registration forms and dues payment must be received by TISCA by the meet entry deadline.

QUALIFYING STANDARDS – SWIMMING: For all individual swimming events, the state qualifying standard will be the average of 56th place at the prior three state championship meets. Standards will be recalculated at the end of each season. If there is an event in which fewer than 56 competitors record a result in a given year, the existing qualifying standard will be used instead of a 56th-place time when calculating the new qualifying standard for that event. Standards may not regress; if the calculated average yields a time slower than the current standard in an event, then the current standard will not be changed. Results from high school, USA Swimming, YMCA, AAU, and other bona fide competitions are recognized for the purpose of meeting the

qualifying standards. [NB: see definition of “bona fide” competition in section IV below.] The qualifying period begins on September 1 each season.

QUALIFYING STANDARDS – DIVING: To qualify for the state championship in diving, athletes must complete at least three diving competitions in the current season. At least one of the competitions must be an 11-dive meet.

CREDENTIALS: Coaches, athletes and officials are required to display credentials or a wristband to gain access to the pool deck. Teams will be allocated one coach/chaperone wristband for every eight (8) competitors entered, up to a maximum of three wristbands per team. Wristbands will be allocated to diving coaches separately. No additional wristbands will be sold.

ENTRY LIMITS: Per NFHS rules, each competitor may enter a maximum of four (4) events, no more than two (2) of which may be individual events and must have met the qualifying time in any entered event during the current season. A team is allowed four (4) scoring entries in each individual event. (Note: should more than four athletes from the same team finish in the top 16 of an event during prelims, only the top four may qualify for and compete in finals. All other athletes from that team will be marked “exhibition” after prelims results are finalized. No athlete, swimmer or diver, needs to be designated “exhibition” before prelims are contested.)

RELAY ENTRIES: Teams are limited to one (1) scoring “A” relay per event. “A” relays must consist of at least three (3) members qualified for and entered in at least one swimming event. Teams may enter a maximum of one (1) “Relay Only” swimmer per gender into the meet. That swimmer is only allowed to compete on the team’s “A” relays. Failure of a “Relay Only” swimmer to compete on at least one relay at the meet will result in a \$100 fine to the team, and the team will be prohibited from entering any “Relay Only” swimmers in the next State Championship Meet. Note: “Relay Only” swimmers must be included in the team’s original entry file (see Meet Invitation for full instructions).

Teams may also enter one (1) “B” relay per event; “B” relays are non-scoring and must be designated as such. All members of a “B” relay must be qualified and entered in the meet in an individual swimming event.

Note: If a diver wishes to participate as a qualified member of an “A” relay team, they must qualify in a “swimming” event. If a diver does not meet this qualification, they may be included as a “Relay Only” swimmer.

RELAY NAMES PROCEDURE: Coaches should designate four individuals per relay with the meet entry file. Relays may be entered without names, but preference is for four names to be included for meet administration purposes. (Note: The names of individuals designated in the meet entry file will NOT be included on the meet psych sheet.) Relay line-ups may be changed up until the relay card is due for that event. Do not include “alternates” in the meet entry file; they do not need to be declared. Any team member entered in the meet is available to swim the prelims,

swim-offs, and/or finals of a relay event provided the competitor does not exceed the total permitted entries for the meet. Designation on a relay shall not count as an entry unless the competitor actually competes in the event.

RELAY CARDS PROCEDURE: Relay cards will be due as follows during both preliminary & finals sessions:

200 Medley Relay: one (1) hour before the start of the session

200 Free Relay: before the start of the 500 free

400 Free Relay: before the start of the 100 back

ENTRY TIMELINE: The *State Meet entry deadline* is the Wednesday of the week prior to the meet, at a time to be specified in the Meet Invitation. Note that the meet entry deadline is also the TISCA registration deadline, and only teams registered with TISCA are eligible to compete in the State Meet (see “Registration” section above). Athletes or relays of teams which fail to meet the entry deadline will be subject to the *Late Entry Policy*: all such swimmers, divers, and relays shall only participate in the preliminary sessions of the State Championship meet. No late-entered athlete or relay will be eligible to advance to finals or score points in the competition.

Teams have until 11:59 PM (in the time zone of the meet host) on the Friday following the meet entry deadline to submit *Entry Corrections*: teams which have met the meet entry deadline may make additions and/or corrections to their entries until the Entry Correction deadline. New athletes and relays may be entered and/or events or seed times corrected. No further corrections, late entries, or TISCA registration will be accepted after the corrections deadline. Note that the psych sheet will not be published until after the corrections deadline.

ENTRY TIME VERIFICATION: A swimmer who does not attain the qualifying time for an event during the competition will be required to provide proof of entered time. The only valid proof of time will be official meet results from the meet where the time was attained. Any diver entered in the meet who fails to complete the event must provide proof of qualification: results from three meets completed this season, at least one of which must be an 11-dive meet. Failure to provide entry time verification within 30 days of the meet will result in a \$50 fine charged to the team per instance. Once 30 days have passed, then proofs will no longer be accepted and fines must be paid. If a team fails to provide proof of time in two consecutive seasons, then the team must pre-verify qualifying times for the following State Meet.

Official meet results are defined as results achieved in high school competition or meets such as USA Swimming, AAU, or Y meets. “Exhibition” swims should be shown as part of the official meet results. A certified official who was present must sign Time Trial results. Team Manager reports are not valid proofs of time.

IV. Bona Fide Competition

TISCA recognizes results from high school, USA Swimming, YMCA, AAU, and other bona fide competitions for the purpose of state meet qualification. TISCA observes the following definition of “bona fide” competition in order to uphold the integrity, consistency, and fairness of swimming and diving competitions throughout each season.

Section 1: Definition of Bona Fide Competition

A "Bona Fide Competition" in swimming or diving is defined as any meet that adheres to the following criteria:

- 1. Sanctioning and Compliance:**
 - The meet must be sanctioned, approved, or observed by TISCA, NFHS, USA Swimming, USA Diving, AAU, YMCA, or another recognized governing body.
 - All events must comply with the official rules, regulations, and competition standards of the governing body.
- 2. Certified Official Oversight:**
 - Meets must have certified referees, starters, and stroke and turn judges when possible. For diving, certified judges trained under NFHS or regional standards are preferred.
 - In cases where certified officials are unavailable, good-faith efforts to secure officials must be documented.
- 3. Accurate Documentation and Results:**
 - Results must be recorded using compliant timing systems and submitted to the appropriate governing body for verification.
 - Diving scores must adhere to NFHS standards and regional documentation rules.
- 4. Sportsmanship and Conduct:**
 - All meets must promote respect, fairness, and sportsmanship, following codes of conduct set by NFHS and/or USA Swimming.

Section 2: Automatic Acceptance Criteria

- 1. Meets Automatically Considered Bona Fide:**
 - Meets sanctioned, approved, or observed by USA Swimming, USA Diving, AAU, YMCA, NFHS, or another recognized body are automatically considered bona fide.
 - Meets between two or more high school teams are automatically considered bona fide unless challenged.
- 2. Challenge Process:**
 - A TISCA member may challenge the status of a meet within 7 days of its conclusion.
 - Challenges must be submitted to the TISCA Vice-President (or designee) and will be adjudicated by the Eligibility Committee.

Section 3: Time Trials and Intrasquad Meets

- 1. Intrasquad Meets:**

- Must be pre-approved by the TISCA Vice-President (or designee) to be considered bona fide.
- 2. **Time Trials:**
 - Time trials held as part of an approved meet are automatically considered bona fide.
 - Standalone time trials require pre-approval from the TISCA Vice-President (or designee).

Section 4: Approval Standards for Competitions

1. Minimum Standards for Approval:

Approval of intrasquad meets and standalone time trials will consider:

- **Pool Acceptability:** Compliance with safety and measurement standards.
- **Officials' Training/Certification:** Preference for certified officials; documentation of efforts to secure them.
- **Timing System Integrity:** Use of approved timing systems and proper documentation of results.

2. Submission Deadlines:

- Applications for pre-approval must be submitted prior to the entry deadline for TISCA qualification.

Section 5: Post-Meet Assessment and Exceptions

1. Post-Meet Assessment Template:

- All meets not automatically accepted must complete a post-meet assessment, documenting adherence to bona fide standards. Note: The post-meet assessment template is available on the TISCA website.

2. Exceptions Process:

- If a meet fails to meet specific criteria, an explanation must be provided.
- Exceptions are not automatic. The Eligibility Committee will review each case based on the meet's integrity and documented efforts to comply.

Section 6: Final Provisions

1. Appeals:

- Teams may appeal decisions regarding meet status to the Eligibility Committee.

2. Effective Date:

- This policy will take effect upon approval at the TISCA Annual Meeting.

3. Review Cycle:

- The policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

V. Awards Programs

Note: For the purpose of combined-team awards at the State Meet, a combined team is defined as a team with both men and women entered in the meet, regardless of whether both genders score points at the meet.

MALE & FEMALE SWIMMER OF THE YEAR: The Swimmer of the Year is determined by the best performance of an individual at the TISCA State Championship Meet. The priorities for selection to this award are, in order:

1. breaking two national high school records;
2. breaking one national high school record;
3. breaking two state records;
4. breaking one state record;
5. winning two individual events;
6. winning one individual event;
7. highest individual finish.

In the event of a tie in any of these criteria, ties will be resolved using the NISCA Powerpoint tables for both events.

MALE & FEMALE DIVER OF THE YEAR: To be voted on at the State Meet by TISCA coaches after the conclusion of diving competition.

MEN'S & WOMEN'S SWIMMING COACH OF THE YEAR: To be voted on at the State Meet by TISCA coaches.

DIVE COACH OF THE YEAR: To be voted on at the State Meet by TISCA coaches.

ALL STATE: Swimmers and divers will be recognized by TISCA as "All State" by placing 1st through 4th in an individual or relay event at the State Meet. Awards for All State will be mailed to each athlete's team after the competition.

DIVISION-BASED TEAM AWARDS: in addition to awards for men's, women's, and combined team State Champions, TISCA presents the following awards following school classifications for TSSAA track & field:

- A. the top-performing men's and women's teams among all programs from TSSAA Division I-A, I-AA, II-A schools, as well as home school teams;
- B. the top-performing men's and women's teams among all programs from TSSAA Division I-AAA schools.

Awards are determined by the following method:

- A. the results of prelims will be scored as a timed-finals championship, with the exception of diving, for which the complete program will be scored.
- B. performances of eligible teams will be scored only against those of other eligible teams.

Trophies are provided for the top 5 men's and women's team in each awards division; ribbons are provided to reflect the top 16 finishers in each event within division competition.

VI. Approved Expenses

- Operational: Maintaining the TISCA website, Google account, et sim.; maintaining a bank account; mailing expenses, et sim.
- Annual Meeting: Meeting room rental, coaches' lunch
- Awards: Team trophies at State, Swimmers/Divers/Coaches of the Year, All State plaques
- Further miscellaneous expenses at the discretion of the Treasurer.