

# Things Every Diving Judge Should Know

by Steve Voellmecke - Posted January 2009 at [springboarddivingblog.com](http://springboarddivingblog.com)

Now that the high school diving season is upon us, many parents (and swimming officials) will take their place in the judges' chair. For many, this will be the first time that they have ever judged diving – and it can be somewhat intimidating. In order to lessen the stress associated with your first time sitting in the judges' chair, I offer the following “Things Every Diving Judge Should Know.”

1. Every Diving Judge should know and be able to identify the FIVE categories of dives. They are Forward Dives, Back Dives, Reverse Dives, Inward Dives and Twisting Dives.
2. Every diving judge should know and be able to identify the FOUR positions used in diving. They are Tuck position, Pike position, Straight (or Layout) position and Free Position.
3. Every diving judge should know and be able to identify a Starting Position, Forward Approach and Hurdle. Every diving judge should also know that there is no such thing as a “hurdle” on a backward takeoff dive.
4. Every diving judge should know that a Hurdle must take-off from ONE foot and land on BOTH feet simultaneously with the toes at or very near the end of the diving board.
5. Every diving judge should know that scores for a dive can range from TEN (“perfect”\*\*) to a ZERO (completely failed dive). \*\* See #7 below.
6. Every diving judge should know the scoring descriptions for judging. They are: 0 Points – completely failed; 0.5 – 2.5 Points (Unsatisfactory); 3.0 – 4.5 Points (Deficient); 5.0 – 6.0 Points (Satisfactory); 6.5 – 8.0 Points (Good); 8.5 – 10 Points (Very Good).
7. Every diving judge should know and understand that relative to the scoring description chart stated in #6 above, a “10” is NOT a perfect score; rather, it is a score that is at the top end of the “Very Good” range.
8. Every diving judge should know that diving is a sport of aesthetics – dives that “look good” score higher.
9. Every diving judge should know that any action a diver does beneath the surface of the water is not taken into account when scoring the dive.
10. Every diving judge should know that a higher dive is a better dive. If two divers do the exact same dive with the exact same form, at the exact same distance and with the exact same entry -- but one of the divers went higher in the air, THAT diver should receive higher scores than the other diver.
11. Every diving judge knows that a dive performed too close to the board is NOT a good dive. TOO CLOSE IS TOO DANGEROUS and should not be rewarded with high scores – even if all other aspects of the dive were good.
12. Every diving judge should understand and be able to identify a “crow hop” and should know that if two divers perform the exact same dive the exact same way, except for one of the divers “crow hops” on the takeoff, then that diver's scores should be lower than the scores for the diver who did not “crow hop.” (A “crow hop” is defined as the lifting of

one or both feet off of the board during a back or inward takeoff dive but prior to the actual takeoff for the dive.

13. Every diving judge should understand the concept of a “balk” in diving and how it DOES NOT affect the score they give for the dive. (A “balk” is declared when a diver, after assuming a starting position, makes an obvious attempt to start the dive and then stops for any reason. If a diver “balks” they get to try the dive one more time. Upon successful completion of the dive on the second try, each judge scores the second attempt as if nothing happened but the REFEREE instructs the announcer to reduce each judge’s score by TWO points as a penalty for the balk).
14. Every diving judge should know to show their score immediately upon command of the announcer. All judges should show their score for each dive simultaneously. **NO PEEKING AT THE OTHER SCORES BEFORE YOU SHOW YOUR SCORE!!**
15. Every diving judge should have a basic understanding of how to calculate the point total for each dive. With five judges, the high score and low score are dropped. The remaining three “middle” scores are added together and their sum total is multiplied by the “Degree of Difficulty” of the dive performed. For a three judge panel, the process is the same except that the high score and low score are NOT dropped.
16. Every diving judge should know that “Degree of Difficulty” is NOT taken into account when judging a dive. Judges are to score the PERFORMANCE of the dive – not the DIFFICULTY of the dive.
17. Every diving judge should know to be consistent with their judging and to not play favorites. If you are a “tough” judge – be “tough” on every diver.
18. Every diving judge should know that the safety of the diver is the number one priority and if they, the judge, see something that could result in injury to a diver they should immediately bring it to the attention of the coach, referee or pool manager. (Examples include broken or malfunctioning equipment, horseplay, lightning in the distance, objects floating in the pool near the diving boards, unsafe dives being attempted or repeated, etc.)
19. Every diving judge should know that judging diving is SUBJECTIVE – it is YOUR opinion. You may like certain things about certain dives that the other judges do not like and vice versa. Remember, YOU are the expert – do not be influenced by anything! (Crowd favorite; Hometown hero; well-known diver; etc.)
20. Every diving judge should know that the more times you judge diving, the better you get!
21. Every diving judge should know that in order to fine tune your “diving eye” you must watch diving on a regular basis. Visit a local high school, summer swim club or age group diving team and watch some practices. Practice scoring each dive you see. If you are fortunate enough to go with somebody, have them practice scoring too and then you can compare scores.
22. Every diving judge should know that you can never stop improving your judging. It takes time; it takes practice and it takes patience.
23. Good luck and HAVE FUN!