

**UNITED STATES SWIMMING
TECHNICAL RULES**

Approved May 9, 2006

**ARTICLE 101
INDIVIDUAL STROKES AND RELAYS**

101.1 BREASTSTROKE (effective 09-21-05)

- .1 **Start** — The forward start shall be used.
- .2 **Stroke** — From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn, the body shall be kept on the breast. It is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time. Throughout the race the stroke cycle must be one arm stroke and one leg kick in that order.

All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under, or over the water. The elbows shall be under water except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and for the final stroke at the finish. The hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water. The hands shall not be brought back beyond the hip line, except during the first stroke after the start and each turn.

During each complete cycle, some part of the swimmer's head shall break the surface of the water. After the start and after each turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke.

- .3 **Kick** — After the start and each turn, a single downward butterfly kick followed by a breaststroke kick is permitted while wholly submerged. Following which, all movements of the legs shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. A scissors, flutter or downward butterfly kick is not permitted except as provided herein. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.

- .4 **Turns and Finish** — At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. The head may be submerged after the last arm pull prior to the touch, provided it breaks the surface of the water at some point during the last complete or incomplete cycle preceding the touch.

101.2 BUTTERFLY

- .1 **Start** — The forward start shall be used.
- .2 **Stroke** — After the start and after each turn, the swimmer's shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast. The swimmer is permitted one or more leg kicks, but only one arm pull under water, which must bring the swimmer to the surface. It shall be permissible for a swimmer to be completely submerged for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and after each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface. The swimmer must remain on the surface until the next turn or finish. From the beginning of the first arm pull, the body shall be kept on the breast. Both arms must be brought forward over the water and pulled back simultaneously.
- .3 **Kick** — All up and down movements of the legs and feet must be simultaneous. The position of the legs or the feet need not be on the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other. A scissors or breaststroke kicking movement is not permitted.
- .4 **Turns** — At each turn the body shall be on the breast. The touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. Once a touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner desired. The shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall.
- .5 **Finish** — At the finish, the body shall be on the breast and the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.

101.3 BACKSTROKE (effective 09-21-05)

- .1 **Start** — The swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter, placing the toes above the lip of the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter, before or after the start, is prohibited.
- .2 **Stroke** — The swimmer shall push off on his back and continue swimming on the back throughout the race. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it is permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn, at the finish and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and after each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface of the water.
- .3 **Turns** — Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. During the turn the shoulders may be turned past the vertical toward the breast after which a continuous single arm pull or a continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to execute the turn. The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall.
- .4 **Finish** — Upon the finish of the race, the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back.

101.4 FREESTYLE

- .1 **Start** — The forward start shall be used.
- .2 **Stroke** — In an event designated freestyle, the swimmer may swim any style, except that in a medley relay or an individual medley event, freestyle means any style other than butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point the head must have broken the surface.
- .3 **Turns** — Upon completion of each length the swimmer must touch the wall.
- .4 **Finish** — The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his person touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance.

101.5 INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY — *Has been omitted for JSSL use.*

101.6 RELAYS

- .1 **Freestyle Relay** — Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke(s). Freestyle finish rules apply.
- .2 **Medley Relay** — Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance in the following order: first, backstroke; second, breaststroke; third, butterfly; and fourth, freestyle. Rules pertaining to each stroke used shall govern where applicable. At the end of each leg, the finish rule for each stroke applies in each case.
- .3 **Rules Pertaining to Relay Races**
 - A No swimmer shall swim more than one leg in any relay event.
 - B When automatic relay take-off judging is used, each swimmer must touch the touchplate or pad in his/her lane at the end of the course to have finished his/her leg of the relay race.
 - C In relay races a swimmer other than the first swimmer shall not start until his/her teammate has concluded his/her leg.
 - D Any relay team member and his/her relay team shall be disqualified from a race if a team member other than the swimmer designated to swim that leg enters the pool in the area where the race is being conducted before all swimmers of all teams have finished the race. Exception: When an in-the-water start is required or such start is approved by the Referee.
 - E Each relay team member shall leave the water immediately upon finishing his/her leg, except the last member.

- F In relay races the team of a swimmer whose feet have lost touch with the starting platform (ground or deck) before his/her preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified.
- G In relay races involving in-the-water starts, the team of a swimmer who has lost touch with the end of the course before his/her preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified, unless the swimmer in default returns to the original starting point at the wall.

ARTICLE 102

CONDUCT AND OFFICIATING OF ALL SWIMMING COMPETITION

102.1 Events

- .3 Organizations entering two or more relay teams in an event shall designate them on the entry blank as Team A, Team B, etc.

JSSL Stroke and Turn Deviations (from USS)

Our Goals: Uniform and Fair Judging, and Fair Scoring

Differences between USS Rules and JSSL Rules:

1. Two false starts charged to a swimmer will be cause for a DQ (instead of One).
2. We allow “head **cushioning**” in the backstroke for 6&U and 7-8 age groups. To prevent injury for our younger swimmers, the recorder should place the palm of his/her hand flat against the end wall of the pool. **This activity does not allow reaching out or turning the palm toward the swimmer’s head**, to do so might cause the swimmer to roll over prior to touching the wall (a DQ) or to stand up prior to touching the wall (potentially altering the order of the finish). (While this issue is not the direct responsibility of the stroke and turn judges, if time permits, you should politely inform the recorders of the correct way to “**cushion** heads” or ask the starter or referee to instruct the recorders.)
3. 6 & Under: The JSSL Bylaws will not be used and USS rules will be applied as written for all age groups. (except deviations which apply to all age groups)
4. 6 & Under swimmers need only to be disqualified for 1 violation. It is not necessary to DQ a 6 & under swimmer for multiple infractions.
5. Backstroke (turn)- Once a swimmer has left the position on the back, if the single arm or continuous simultaneous double arm pull has been completed but the backstroke flip turn not executed kicking will be allowed in order for the swimmer to complete the backstroke flip turn.
6. Breaststroke (interpretation of the new ruling)
The official interpretation for the changes to the breaststroke (101.1) is that during, or at the end of the arm pull-down of the first stroke after the start and after each

turn, a single downward butterfly kick is allowed, but not required, followed by a breaststroke kick. During the pull-down, if a downward butterfly kick is taken, it must be followed by a breaststroke kick. It is not permissible to take only a downward butterfly kick without then taking a normal breaststroke kick. The downward butterfly kick is not permissible prior to the arm pull-down. In addition, there is now a requirement for all movements of the legs to be “in the same horizontal plane and without alternating movement”. This was previously not included in the rules.

Five questions you should ask yourself before you DQ a swimmer.

1. Are you absolutely certain of what you saw?
2. **Can you explain** the rule regarding the infraction and describe what you saw?
3. Were you in the correct position to see the infraction?
4. Was it your call?
5. Was it beyond a doubt? (The swimmer always gets the benefit of the doubt!)

You should DQ a swimmer if and only if you can answer yes to all five questions.

Finally:

Judges should refer parents to the meet director or swim coach for a clarification of the rule / infraction. If there is a dispute, the parent / coach should refer the call in question to their meet director who will help resolve the issue.

6 & Unders should NOT be approached by officials. All DQ slips will be delivered to the table and then distributed to coaches.

Do not discuss previous DQ's when you are supposed to be watching a new heat in progress. A meet director or coach is owed a brief polite explanation when time permits: refer persistent or rude questioners to the meet director or referee. Remember: you have the final say on all stroke and turn judging (unless overruled by the referee – very rare).

Additional Rules:

1. The swimmer must touch the end of the pool. This most commonly affects the finish of the backstroke and is usually the concern of the timers. The finish is when “any part of the swimmer touches the wall” – not when the hand crosses the “plane of the wall”.
2. The swimmer must not pull on the side of the pool or on the lane lines. Swimmers often hit the lane line – especially doing the backstroke. There is no DQ unless the swimmer propels him/herself using the side wall or the lane line.
3. The swimmer must not push off the bottom. The key point is not whether the swimmer touched the bottom, but whether he/she gained advantage by pushing off the bottom. With the exception of the relay start – swimmers may push off the side or bottom of the pool.

4. The swimmer must not interfere with another swimmer. Again, this is most common in the backstroke. Crossing under the lane with part or all of the body is OK so long as there is no interference and there is no pulling on the lane line.

Relay Starts:

IN THE WATER relay starts

Although this not the responsibility of the stroke and turn judge, you may be asked to fill out the form for the false start judges. In relay races, the incoming swimmer (finishing their leg of a swim) must touch the wall before the **hand** of the next swimmer has left the wall. The “next” swimmer in a relay must have hand contact with the wall, when or after the “incoming” swimmer finishes their leg of the swim, before starting their leg of the race.

The proper way to judge this start is to watch the hand of the swimmer in the water. Does that swimmer have or make contact with the wall at / when the incoming swimming finishes, before leaving the wall. After you see his/her hand leave the wall, look to see if the swimmer in the water has made the touch.

Consecutive relay swimmers may enter the water AFTER the incoming swimmer has started their leg of the race. Swimmer 2 may enter the water AFTER swimmer 1 has started swimming. Swimmer 3 may enter the water AFTER swimmer 2 has started swimming, etc.

Idiosyncratic Pools:

Although we use four stroke and turn judges at dual meets and six at the Championship meet, it is not physically possible to judge “evenly” at many of our pools. The judges should decide before the meet on the fairest method so that lanes 1-3 receive the same advantages/disadvantages as lane 4-6. For example, it is not fair to walk a longer section of pool deck than the judges on the other side are able to walk. To help alleviate the problems associated with our L-shaped pools, if turns/finishes are difficult to judge, then two judges may be placed at the ends rather than the sides of the pool.

The meet director is responsible for insuring that swimmers and/or spectators do not interfere with the “right-of-way” of stroke and turn judges along the sides of the pool.

USS Swim Rules, adopted since January 1, 1998

Returning Stroke and Turn judges should be aware that there are several changes to the rules in the past few years, as summarized below:

Breaststroke:	Permitting the shoulder to drop on turns and during the swim.
Butterfly:	1. Permitting the shoulder to drop on turns. 2. Limiting underwater portion to 15 meters.
Freestyle:	Limiting underwater portion to 15 meters.
Forward Start:	Permitting uneven (not same distance from front) initial foot placement.