

REFEREE BRIEFING GUIDELINES May 2010

Stroke Judges judge the entire pool length and help the turn judges observe the turns at both ends of the pool.

Please remind officials that we are there to judge the legality of the strokes. If in doubt the benefit goes to the swimmer – the judge must be 100% certain that what they observed was an infraction.

The official must be in the correct position to make the call. If they are required to judge more than one lane and they have two swimmers coming in at the same time they should choose one lane and judge that lane.

Free Style:

- Dive Start
- Some part of the head must surface by the 15 metre mark (false start rope) off the start and at each turn
- The swimmer can do any stroke and any combination of strokes
- Must touch at every turn and at the finish
- Swimmer may not pull on the lane ropes or walk along the bottom of the pool

Breaststroke:

- Dive Start
- From the start and at each turn the swimmer may take a full arm stroke past the hips and one kick. At the widest part of the second stroke some part of the head must surface
- A single butterfly kick is permitted after the start and each turn during the first arm stroke followed by a breaststroke kick. Initiation of the arm pull begins when the hands separate off the dive/wall.
- The feet may break the surface of the water during the pullout at the start and the turn, providing the remainder of the swimmer is submerged.
- The kick throughout the stroke is a whip kick **ONLY**
- The stroke is a symmetrical stroke – that is what the left side does the right side shall mirror
- The touch at the turn and at the final touch is simultaneous – it may be at a different level but both hands touch at the same time
- The swimmer must leave the wall on the breast
- The elbows are to be in the water throughout the stroke with the exceptions of the last stroke before a turn and at the finish touch, where the swimmer may reach for the wall with the elbows out over the water.

Butterfly:

- Dive start
- Some part of the head must surface at the 15 metre mark off the start and at each turn (the swimmer may choose to do a butterfly kick underwater to this point) or,
- The head must surface following the first complete arm pull off the start or the turn
- The kick is the butterfly kick **ONLY** (PARA and Master swimmers are allowed to do breaststroke kick)
- The arms must clear the water throughout each stroke
- The arms must clear over the water (you must see air under the arm) for PARA swimmers
- The stroke is a symmetrical stroke – that is what the left side does the right side shall mirror
- The touch at the turn and at the final touch is simultaneous – it may be at a different level but both hands touch at the same time

Backstroke:

- The start is from the water, the swimmer lines up facing the starting end with both hands holding the starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip or gutter is not permitted.
- Some part of the head must surface at the 15 metre mark.
- The swimmer must remain on the back throughout the race
- The swimmer may do any stroke on the back
- At the turn the swimmer may touch on their back
- Or, if they choose to do a tumble turn – once they turn onto their breast, they may take one single arm pull or a double arm pull simultaneously. Once the arm has completed the pull (the hand is past the hips) the swimmer must be into the turn. Kicking into the turn is not of concern. An extended layout would be one where there is no obvious initiation of the turn by initial movement of the hand after the turn to breast or an obvious glide once the hand has completed the pull. Wording for the disqualification is failure to initiate the turn once on the breast.
- It is **legal** for a swimmer to be turned over to the breast (at the turn) and grab the wall if he is too close to tumble turn. The swimmer can not glide into the wall before grabbing. The swimmer must have returned to the position on the back upon leaving the wall.
- Suicide and bucket turns are acceptable and executed while still on the back without the shoulders passing the 90 degrees vertical prior to the touch.
- At the completion of the turn the swimmer must leave the wall on their back – past the 90 degree point onto their back.
- The finish touch must be on the back

Individual Medley (IM):

- The order for IM is butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle

- The freestyle stroke must be something other than fly, back or breast
- The finish touch of each stroke must be as they would finish each individual stroke; for example with the backstroke, the swimmer must touch on their back.

Individual Medley Relay:

- The order for the IM relay is backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle.

Judging Relay Takeovers:

- The take over judge is observing that the departing swimmer does not leave prior to the touch of the incoming swimmer
- The judge will observe the departing swimmers toes and once they have left the starting platform the judge drops their eyes to the incoming swimmer to ensure that they have touched
- The departing swimmer may be in motion on the starting platform prior to their toes leaving
- The swimmers **MUST** swim in the order their names appear on the relay entry card held by the timers
- Any swimmer whose feet lose touch with the starting platform prior to the touch of the preceding teammate will be disqualified. A swimmer who leaves early is not permitted to return to the start to touch out.

Emphasize what should be seen during the swimming of a stroke – avoid discussing what you should not see, what to look out for/watch for or what is illegal.

Annette Gillis
Chair of Officials Swim Alberta

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