

## USA Swimming Stroke and Turn Clinic based on 2012 Rules and Regulations

- USA Swimming (USAS) and North Carolina Swimming (NCS) judging philosophy:
  - One set of rules enforced by certified officials provides an equitable and level playing field for all competitors—beginning swimmers to Olympians.
  - Officials are “interested observers” who report infractions they witness during the competition.
  - Disqualifications help coaches and swimmers identify areas for improvement.
- Your responsibilities:
  - You represent North Carolina Swimming and USA Swimming when you officiate, not a team.
  - Know the rules completely. The coaches and swimmers expect officials to know the rules. Swimmers can only break rules that are stated in the rule book. Apply rules consistently and fairly to all swimmers regardless of age, skill, cuteness, or team.
  - Be attentive and be in position. Don’t leave your position without someone relieving you.
  - Treat all other volunteers, coaches and especially the swimmers with respect and courtesy.
  - Raise your hand immediately upon observation of a rule violation.
    - 1) “Call what you see, see what you call.” Swimmer ALWAYS gets the benefit of the doubt.
    - 2) Don’t be afraid to discuss a call with a head judge or referee. You can always “take back” a call but you can never make a late call.
  - Fill out the Disqualification Report or “DQ slip” accurately (see last page for example).
    - 1) Immediately after lowering your hand, write details-- heat/lane/infraction-- on your heat sheet and wait until your jurisdiction is clear to write up DQ slips. Your first obligation is to swimmers in the pool. Writing DQ slips is second priority but you have to do that in a timely manner, too.
    - 2) Know without doubt the event, heat, and lane. Check and check again.
    - 3) Check the applicable boxes on the slip. Sign it. Get it to the referee in a timely manner.
- Some important definitions for terms used by officials, in the rule book, or on the DQ slip:
  - Jurisdiction: your area of responsibility assigned by the referee. Example “Lanes 1-3 start end, as far as you can clearly see.” Each of your lanes gets equal attention, even if it’s empty.
  - Two hand simultaneous touch (breaststroke and butterfly only): both hands touch the wall at the same time but not necessarily symmetrically. If both hands touch at different times, that’s a non-simultaneous touch. For a one hand touch, you must know for sure that second hand did not touch. “I saw that the left hand did not touch” (a DQ) versus “I didn’t see the left hand touch” (not a DQ because it may have touched and you just missed it-- benefit of the doubt to the swimmer).
  - On the wall: swimmer has completed required touch but has not lost contact with wall. A swimmer may turn in any manner he chooses and does not come back under the stroke rules until he loses contact with the wall or “leaves the wall”. What he does while “on the wall” is not judged unless he gets out of the pool before he finishes the race.
  - Horizontal: arms parallel to water surface.
  - At vertical: shoulders perpendicular to water surface.
  - Shoulders past vertical toward the breast: shoulders rotated so the breast is more down than up. Note: shoulder position is only judged after swimmer has “left the wall”.
  - Shoulders past vertical toward the back: shoulders rotated so the breast is more up than down.
  - Start: from the time the starting signal sounds until the swimmer enters the water.
  - Turn: from the time the swimmer makes contact with the wall until the swimmer loses contact with the wall going the other way.
  - Finish: final contact with the wall at the conclusion of the race.
  - Swim: everything else.

## THE TECHNICAL STROKE RULES (2012)

### Butterfly (Section 101.3)

- 1) Forward start.
- 2) Shoulders at or past vertical toward the breast at all times.
- 3) After the start and each turn, swimmer's head must break the surface by 15M. Must stay on surface (some portion of the swimmer's body must break the surface of the water at all times) until next turn or finish.
- 4) No rules on numbers of or order of pulls and kicks or when they must occur.
- 5) Feet must move up and down simultaneously and may not change or alternate in relationship to each other. No scissors, breaststroke, or alternating kick.
- 6) Arms must be pulled back and brought forward over the water simultaneously. "Over the water" means the entire arm must recover over the water. However, there is no requirement that there be a visible space between the water and the recovering arms. Some continuous portion of the arm between the wrist and shoulder breaks the surface of the water. If either/both arms are brought forward completely below the water's surface during the swim or at a turn or finish, that is an underwater recovery.
- 7) Swimmer must execute a two-hand simultaneous touch at each turn after which he may turn in any manner. Swimmer must be at or past vertical toward the breast when his feet leave the wall.
- 8) Swimmer must execute a two-hand simultaneous touch at the finish.

### Backstroke (Section 101.4)

- 1) Start in the water facing wall. Toes may not grip the gutter after the starting signal.
- 2) Shoulders always at or past vertical toward the back except as allowed at turns.
- 3) After the start and each turn, swimmer's head must break the surface by 15M. The swimmer may not submerge again except at the next turn and at the finish.
- 4) No cycle or stroke form requirements. "Freestyle on the back."
- 5) At each turn, a swimmer may choose to turn in several ways. May swim to the wall, touch at or past vertical to his back, turn in any manner, and push off. Must be at or past vertical to the back when feet leave the wall. Or swimmer may execute a "continuous backstroke turn":
  - a. Turns past vertical toward his breast prior to touching the wall.
  - b. Immediately initiates either a single arm pull or a simultaneous double arm pull. Watch HAND(s) to make sure the pull starts as soon as the swimmer is on his breast. If pull doesn't start immediately, that's called "delay initiating pull".
  - c. Immediately after completion of the pull, swimmer begins his turn. Once you see the hand(s) stop moving, the pull is complete. Shift eyes up to look at the HEAD. The swimmer's head must be initiating the turn (head moving up or down to begin productive tumbling action) or already into the turning action. Watch HAND then HEAD. If the head is stationary above the water and not engaged in the turning action, that is called "delay initiating turn".
  - d. Some part of the swimmer must touch the wall at the turn.
  - e. When feet leave the wall, swimmer must be at or past vertical to the back.
- 6) At finish swimmer must touch with any part of the body while shoulders are at or past vertical toward the back.

### Breaststroke (Section 101.2)

- 1) Forward start.
- 2) Swimmer must stay on breast during entire swim.
- 3) Breaststroke is the only "cycle stroke" meaning that the order and number of pulls and kicks is regulated. First movement after the start and each turn must be a pull. Arms must be horizontal at the initiation of the first stroke. Then one kick, one pull, one kick, etc., with head breaking

the surface at least once during each pull/kick cycle although the swimmer is not required to breathe.

- 4) During the start and after each turn, the swimmer may choose to do a "pull out". The swimmer is allowed to take one pull completely past hips and the first arm stroke begins with the separation of the hands. The "pull out phase" is the only time a pull past hips is permitted. Pull must be followed by either 1) a single downward butterfly kick (only time a butterfly kick is permitted) followed by a breaststroke kick or 2) a breaststroke kick. Swimmer may start stroking (pull/kick) without a "pull out". Head must break the surface before hands turn in at widest part of second pull in all cases.
- 5) Arms must move simultaneously in same horizontal plane with no alternating movement. Hands may not pull past the hipline (except as allowed at the start and each turn) and must be pushed forward from the breast. Elbows must retain contact with water during recovery except at finish and turns. Hands may come out of the water.
- 6) Feet must be turned out during the propulsive part of the kick and must move simultaneously in same horizontal plane. No scissors kick. No alternating kick. No butterfly kick during swim - feet not turned out - except as allowed at start and turns. Feet may come up at the end of the kick and may come out of the water as long as that movement is not followed by a downward butterfly kick.
- 7) Swimmer must execute a two-hand simultaneous touch at each turn. Must be at or past vertical to the breast after feet leave the wall.
- 8) Swimmer must execute a two-hand simultaneous touch at the finish.

### **Freestyle (Section 101.5)**

- 1) Forward start.
- 2) After start and each turn, swimmer's head must break surface by 15M. Swimmer may not completely submerge again except at turn or finish.
- 3) No stroke form requirements. During freestyle events and freestyle relays swimmer may swim any stroke including backstroke, butterfly, or breaststroke (not true for freestyle leg of IM or medley relay when swimmer may swim any stroke except butterfly, backstroke, or breaststroke).
- 4) Some part of the body must touch the wall at each turn. Note the swimmer may miss the wall on a turn and as long as he comes back and touches before touching the other wall, he is legal. Return option is only allowed in freestyle events and freestyle relays not in any other stroke.
- 5) Swimmer may stand on the bottom of the pool during freestyle (only). May not walk on or spring from bottom in any event.

### **Individual Medley ("IM") (Section 101.6)**

- 1) Butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle in that order.
- 2) Judge IM as if it were four individual races, one of each stroke. Mark infractions in each stroke section and the stroke infraction number in the IM section. Record multiple infractions for the same swimmer on one DQ slip but raise your hand for each that you observe.
- 3) Start rules apply to start of each stroke segment. Turn rules apply to intermediate turns within a stroke segment. Finish rules apply to finishes of each segment:
  - a. Two hand simultaneous touch at end of butterfly then leave wall for backstroke with shoulders at or past vertical toward back.
  - b. Finish backstroke by touching with shoulders at or past vertical toward back and leave wall for breaststroke with shoulders at or past vertical toward breast. May see a backward somersault turn (not the continuous backstroke turn!) or a shoulders-at-vertical cross-over touch with a forward flip turn but swimmer may not roll past vertical to the breast prior to touching the wall no matter what turn method they choose.

- c. Two hand simultaneous touch at end of breaststroke. Swimmer may choose any stroke for the freestyle leg except backstroke, breaststroke, or butterfly.

### RELAYS-- STROKE JUDGING (Section 101.7)

- FREESTYLE RELAYS
  - 1) Each of 4 swimmers swims prescribed distance according to freestyle rules.
  - 2) Swimmers must exit the pool promptly except last swimmer. None may re-enter pool.
- MEDLEY RELAYS
  - 1) Backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle in that order.
  - 2) Swimmers judged in accordance with each stroke's rules. Freestyler can swim any stroke except backstroke, breaststroke, or butterfly.
  - 3) Judge Medley Relay as four individual races of each stroke. Mark infractions in each stroke section. Then write the infraction and swimmer number in the relay section. Record multiple infractions for the same team on one DQ slip but raise your hand for each.

### RELAYS-- TAKE OFF JUDGING:

- 1) Swimmers #2, #3, and #4 may not leave the block/wall before teammate touches.
- 2) Watch TOES of the starting swimmer leave the block (lose contact) then look down in the water for the incoming swimmer's HAND to be in contact with the wall. If a swimmer's take off is good, mark him with a circle. If it's early, mark him with an "X". See form below.
- 3) Dual confirmation: your X's must exactly match (lane and swimmer #) the other judge's before a DQ is called. No hand is raised during the race. If you have an "X", compare notes with your partner at the end of a heat not during a race. If early take off calls match exactly, write one DQ slip that both judges sign. Caution on dual confirmation: Don't mark an X unless you would disqualify that swimmer on your own. Swimmer gets benefit if you're at all uncertain.
- 4) One judge may be positioned in the lane and the other judge on the side. For example, the Lane Judge observes take offs for Lanes 4-1 from beside the Lane 4 block. The Side Judge observes take offs for Lanes 1-4 from the side of the pool by Lane 1. Another arrangement is for both judges to independently watch Lanes 1-4 from beside Lane 1. The referee will choose.
- 5) Sometimes you will receive Relay Take Off forms to fill out. If not, just draw legible grids on your heat sheet for each heat.

Relay Take Off Record  
Side Judge 1

Ln 1	(2)	(3)	(X)
Ln 2	(2)	(3)	(4)
Ln 3	(2)	(3)	(4)
Ln 4	(X)	(3)	(4)

Relay Take Off Record  
Lane Judge 2

Ln 1	(2)	(3)	(4)
Ln 2	(2)	(3)	(4)
Ln 3	(2)	(3)	(4)
Ln 4	(X)	(3)	(4)

For this heat, the Lane 4 team would be disqualified for dual-confirmed early take off on swimmer #2.

The team in Lane 1 would not be disqualified since only one judge called an early take off.

### OTHER "OTHER" RULES (Sect. 102.10)

- 1) Swimmer must finish a race.
- 2) Swimmer may not propel himself along on the lane line.
- 3) Swimmer must start and finish in the same lane.

### NEXT STEPS: YOUR ON DECK APPRENTICESHIP

- 1) It is recommended joining USA Swimming as a non-athlete member prior to the start of your 5th session. Membership application and directions are available at [www.NCSwim.org/Educate/Registration](http://www.NCSwim.org/Educate/Registration). When you join USAS, you will receive a rule book and a membership card that you should wear on deck. USAS membership is good for a calendar

- year. If you join in the last half of a year, membership is good through the next calendar year. Membership is renewed each fall. Check with your team on renewal procedures.
- 2) Set up a free account on [www.USASwimming.org](http://www.USASwimming.org). Click "Sign In" in upper right hand corner then "Click Here" by "Need to Create an Account?"
  - 3) Study the technical rules. If you don't have a printed rule book you can download the technical rules at [www.USASwimming.org](http://www.USASwimming.org). Click on "Member Resources/Officials" then scroll down and click "Learn More" under Rules and Regulations. Select option b: "USA Swimming Mini-Rulebook". Study Article 101.2-101.7 and Article 102.10. Study Article 105 about judging swimmers with disabilities and section M for Masters rules.
  - 3) Begin your on deck apprenticeship. Work at least 6 sessions over at least 4 meets with at least 2 different referees. Cover a variety of levels for the broadest experience— age group and senior, BB+ and B/C, prelim and finals. You can apprentice at any USAS sanctioned meet. Check the meet schedule at [www.NCSwim.org](http://www.NCSwim.org). Information about each meet is also available there.
    - Dress in white top (no team logos) and navy bottoms (not jeans). Pockets are handy. Your shoes should be white. Plan to get splashed and choose your attire accordingly. Hats and sunscreen for outdoor meets. Attach your USAS membership card which you have laminated at your waist (preferred) or on a lanyard around your neck. Have a pen (ball point, click style).
    - Read the rules again before every meet but don't take the rule book on deck with you.
    - Find the "Hospitality" room. Ask for the "sign in sheet" and sign in as an apprentice judge. Introduce yourself to the referee. Let her know how many apprentice sessions you have worked. Don't be afraid to request a particular position if you need experience on one end of the pool or the other.
    - Be on time for the stroke briefing/officials meeting, usually 30 - 60 minutes before meet start and the time is usually provided in the meet information.
    - The referee will assign you to work with an experienced official who will help you learn the job. Work with different judges at every meet. You'll observe a variety of styles, tricks of the trade, and methods that will help you develop your own.
    - Report to your assigned position on time, at least 5 minutes before the first heat. Ask your mentor judge to let you write up any DQ slips for calls he makes. Be sure you clearly understand the call even if you did not see the infraction or disagree with the call. It's his call. Have the mentor judge double check your slip and sign it. Describe the infraction back to the judge in the words of the rule book to be sure you're clear on the call.
    - Deliver the slip to the referee. Approach the referee (not during a start or finish) or Head Judge, hand him the slip and describe the infraction concisely, in the words of the rule book, without any hand gestures. He will usually ask you three questions: Were you in position? What did you observe? What rule does that violate? He asks to fully understand a call before accepting it and to prepare himself to explain the call to the swimmer's coach. If he has specific questions about the infraction which you can't answer without doubt, go back to your mentor judge and ask. During your apprenticeship, a referee may quiz you about the rules to help you practice and learn.
    - If you are ever approached by a parent about a DQ, it's usually best to ask the parent speak to his coach. Same if a swimmer approaches you. If you are approached by a coach, ask him to speak with the referee. You are not required to explain DQs to anyone but the referee.
  - 4) The referee will enter your apprentice sessions into USA Swimming's Online Tracking System (OTS). A few weeks after each meet, log into [USASwimming.org](http://USASwimming.org) to verify. Sign in then click on "Volunteers" at the top then "Officials" on the side then "Officials Tracking" and "View My History" to see your meets and sessions worked. You will also do this after you're certified.
  - 5) When you've worked at least 6 sessions and you're fully comfortable in the official role, email the North Carolina Swimming Judges Training Chair at [Judgestrainingchair@ncswim.org](mailto:Judgestrainingchair@ncswim.org). He/She will certify you and send you your NCS name tag and your certification card.

## “BEING IN POSITION”, YOUR JURISDICTION, AND A FEW FINAL POINTS

- During the officials meeting, you will be assigned a specific position and jurisdiction. Assigned jurisdiction may change meet to meet depending on the number of officials and the pool set up. Technically, you should only make any calls for infractions that occur within your jurisdiction.
  - **Specific lanes on the start end** Position yourself in the middle of your assigned lanes in a way that doesn't interfere with swimmers on the blocks. When swimmers step up, position yourself right behind the blocks out of the starter's sightline. Keep very still during the start. At the horn, step up to the edge of the pool to observe the swimmers in your lanes. Be sure to observe all your lanes equally even if they're empty. When the swimmers move beyond your jurisdiction, step back if possible or sit down if requested to do so by the referee. Step up to the edge when swimmers come back into your jurisdiction for a turn or finish. Be sure you are at the very edge of the pool with an unobstructed view of the wall for all your lanes.
  - **Specific lanes on the turn end** Same as for the start end but you don't have to worry about the start. Be sure you are standing over the edge of the pool with an unobstructed view of the wall in all your assigned lanes.
  - **Stroke Judge/Walker** Usually only assigned for long course meets if both sides of the competition course are navigable. Ask your referee to confirm the method she wants you to use (lead or lag) as it may differ referee to referee and pool to pool.
  - **15M mark** Only assigned if both sides of the pool are accessible at the 15 meter mark locations and only if the 15 meter mark is appropriately marked on the lane ropes for the swimmers to see. Step up to the side of the pool at the start and observe until all swimmers in your lanes pass the 15 meter mark then step back. If the 15 meter buoys on the lane ropes aren't straight, judge all swimmers in your lanes against the marker that is farthest out. Ask the referee which legs of each swim should be observed, every leg, just the start? (Remember, no 15M for breaststroke races.) Often walkers observe the 15M marks.
  - **Relief** Really important for outdoor meets and long sessions. After 15 or 20 minutes, start relieving the judges. Wait for the swimmers to clear the judge's jurisdiction then say, "I will be relieving you for X minutes at the start of the next heat." When the heat in progress is over, step in for the judge. Make sure you know which event and heat it is. When he returns, step out when the heat in progress is over and tell the returning judge the next heat number. Move on to the next judge. Don't forget your own break! You may be asked to take DQ slips to the referee if runners aren't available.

## NOW THAT YOU'RE A CERTIFIED OFFICIAL

- Once you're certified, you may officiate at any USA Swimming meet hosted by any team in any state. Please consider officiating at the "away" meets you attend as well as meets your team hosts. USA Swimming requires a minimum number of officials for meets and NCS teams rely heavily on each other to staff the deck with visiting volunteer officials. Also, you must work a minimum number of sessions per each certification period to remain certified, not to mention that the practice will make you a better judge. At meets, go to Hospitality and follow the same procedure as you did when signing in to apprentice but now sign in as a S&T judge.
- The referees will continue to enter your meet sessions into USA Swimming's Online Tracking System (OTS). You'll want to log in to verify your sessions a few weeks after each meet. You may add in activities on the "Activity History" tab. This is for things like teaching a summer league or high school clinic or attending a stroke briefing (clinic) at a state or sectional championship meet.
- All officials renew their certification in August of each renewal year. Check your card for your expiration dates. You'll hear from NCS with instructions on recertifying when the time arrives.

Recertification involves taking an online test, meeting the minimum number of sessions worked, and attending a USAS clinic within that certification period.

## RESOURCES

- [www.NCSwim.org](http://www.NCSwim.org): Officials resources are under the "Educate" tab including an email link to our Officials Chair, Mike Hoffer. There is also an Officials Committee whose members may be contacted with any questions, suggestions, etc.
- [www.USASwimming.org](http://www.USASwimming.org): Officials resources are in the "Member Resources/Officials" section.
- Your team's coach, referee, other parent officials, or your clinic referee. All have significant interest in making sure you have a great apprenticeship and become a very successful official!

DISQUALIFICATION REPORT



EVENT # \_\_\_\_\_ HEAT \_\_\_\_\_ LANE \_\_\_\_\_  
SWIMMER \_\_\_\_\_

**BREASTROKE**

DURING: START \_\_\_\_\_ SWIM \_\_\_\_\_ TURN \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH \_\_\_\_\_  
10 KICK: ALTERNATING \_\_\_\_\_ BUTTERFLY \_\_\_\_\_ SCISSORS \_\_\_\_\_  
11 ARMS: NON-SIMULTANEOUS \_\_\_\_\_ TWO STROKES UNDER \_\_\_\_\_  
NOT IN SAME HORIZONTAL PLANE \_\_\_\_\_ PAST HIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
12 ELBOWS RECOVERED OVER WATER \_\_\_\_\_  
14 CYCLE: HEAD NOT UP \_\_\_\_\_ DOUBLE PULLS/KICKS \_\_\_\_\_  
15 TOUCH: ONE HAND \_\_\_\_\_ NON-SIMULTANEOUS \_\_\_\_\_  
16 NOT TOWARD THE BREAST OFF WALL \_\_\_\_\_  
19 OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

**BUTTERFLY**

DURING: START \_\_\_\_\_ SWIM \_\_\_\_\_ TURN \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH \_\_\_\_\_  
20 KICK: ALTERNATING \_\_\_\_\_ BREAST \_\_\_\_\_ SCISSORS \_\_\_\_\_  
21 ARMS: NON-SIMULTANEOUS \_\_\_\_\_ UNDERWATER RECOV. \_\_\_\_\_  
23 TOUCH: ONE HAND \_\_\_\_\_ NON-SIMULTANEOUS \_\_\_\_\_  
24 NOT TOWARD THE BREAST OFF WALL \_\_\_\_\_  
25 HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15M \_\_\_\_\_  
29 OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

**BACKSTROKE**

DURING: START \_\_\_\_\_ SWIM \_\_\_\_\_ TURN \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH \_\_\_\_\_  
30 TOES OVER LIP OF GUTTER AFTER START \_\_\_\_\_  
31 HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15M \_\_\_\_\_  
32 NOT ON BACK OFF WALL \_\_\_\_\_  
33 NO TOUCH AT TURN \_\_\_\_\_  
34 PAST VERTICAL AT TURN:  
DELAY INITIATING ARM PULL \_\_\_\_\_ MULTIPLE STROKES \_\_\_\_\_  
DELAY INITIATING TURN \_\_\_\_\_  
35 SHOULDERS PAST VERTICAL \_\_\_\_\_  
36 COMPLETELY SUBMERGED PRIOR TO TURN OR FINISH \_\_\_\_\_  
39 OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

**INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY**

41 STROKE INFRACTION(S) # \_\_\_\_\_  
42 OUT OF SEQUENCE \_\_\_\_\_

**FREESTYLE**

50 NO TOUCH TURN # \_\_\_\_\_  
51 HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15M \_\_\_\_\_

**RELAYS**

70 STROKE INFRACTION # \_\_\_\_\_ SWIMMER # \_\_\_\_\_  
71 EARLY TAKE OFF SWIMMER # \_\_\_\_\_  
72 CHANGED ORDER: SWIMMER \_\_\_\_\_ STROKE \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER**

60 FALSE START \_\_\_\_\_ 61 DELAY OF MEET \_\_\_\_\_  
62 DID NOT FINISH \_\_\_\_\_ 63 DECLARED FALSE START \_\_\_\_\_  
69 OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

JUDGE: \_\_\_\_\_  
(print name clearly)

REFEREE: \_\_\_\_\_  
(print name clearly)

NOTIFIED: \_\_\_\_\_ SWIMMER \_\_\_\_\_ COACH \_\_\_\_\_

rev. (06/09)

DISQUALIFIED