

A large, light-colored watermark of the USA Swimming logo is centered in the background. It features a shield with a white star at the bottom, and the words 'USA' and 'SWIMMING' in large, bold letters. The shield is outlined in a light blue color.

USA Swimming  
and Minnesota Swimming  
**Stroke and Turn Technical Rules  
Clinic**

Clinic Instructors: Jack Swanson  
and Rebecca Binder

# Clinic Overview

- Introduction
- Philosophy of Officiating
- Technical Rules
- Pursuing Certification
- Questions



# Philosophy of Officiating

- Everything is grounded in the rules. The rules determine what is allowed and what is not.
  - “Ugly but legal” is okay
- Observation should be consistent for all rules and all swimmers
- Swimmer ALWAYS gets the benefit of the doubt
- Observers, not inspectors
- Call what you see, See what you call

# Technical Rules

- Four Main Strokes
  - Freestyle
  - Backstroke
  - Butterfly
  - Breaststroke
- Other Events
  - Individual Medley
  - Relays
- Please see the appendix for definitions.



# What You're Looking At

Stroke	Start	Body	Head	Arms	Legs	Turn	Finish
Freestyle	Forward	Any	Break the surface by 15M	Any	Any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May turn in any manner</li> <li>• Must touch at turn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must touch at finish</li> </ul>
Backstroke	Backward	On the back	Break the surface by 15M	Any	Any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May turn in any manner</li> <li>• Must touch at turn</li> <li>• No delay in arm pull/initiation of turn</li> <li>• Must be on back when feet leave the wall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must touch while on the back at finish</li> </ul>
Butterfly	Forward	On the breast	Break the surface by 15M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First pull brings to surface</li> <li>• Arms over the water simultaneously</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simultaneous up and down</li> <li>• No alternating, scissors or breaststroke kick</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two hands simultaneous touch at, above or below the water surface</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must touch while on the breast at finish</li> <li>• Two hands simultaneous touch at, above or below the water surface</li> </ul>
Breaststroke	Forward	On the breast	Break the surface by first breaststroke pull	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cycle stroke</li> <li>• Simultaneous and same horizontal plane</li> <li>• Elbows under water except at turn</li> <li>• May take one pull past hips at start/turn before first breaststroke pull</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breaststroke kick (propulsion with feet turned out)</li> <li>• May take a single butterfly kick at start/turn before breaststroke cycle begins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two hands simultaneous touch at, above or below the water surface</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must touch while on the breast at finish</li> <li>• Two hands simultaneous touch at, above or below the water surface</li> </ul>



# Technical Rules: Freestyle

## Start

- Forward start.

## Stroke/Kick

- Any style may be used. Must break surface throughout the race except swimmer may be submerged after start and each turn not more than 15 meters where head must break surface.

## Turns/Finish

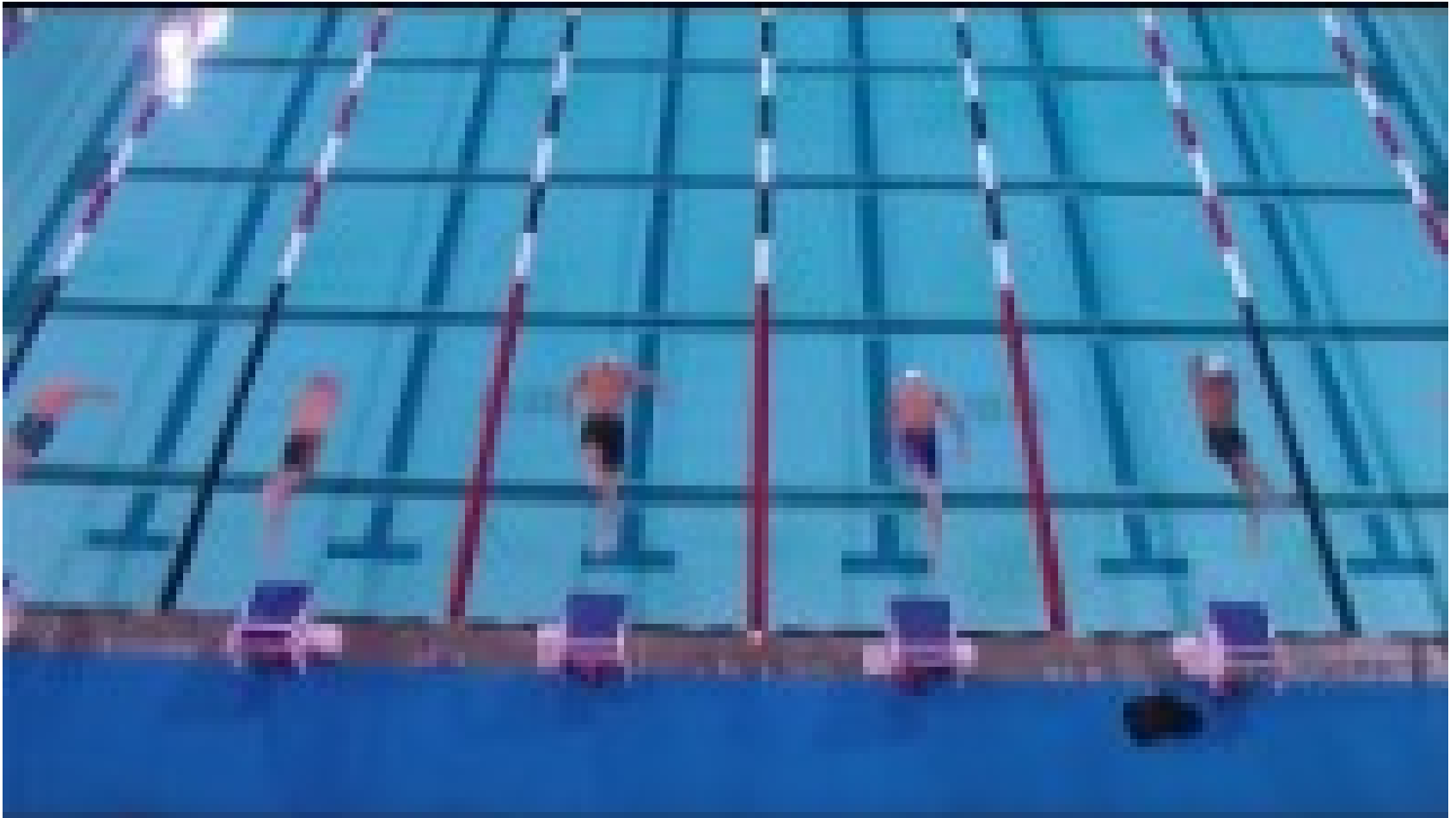
- Some part of swimmer must touch the wall at completion of each length or required distance.



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# Freestyle Video

[Click Here to Play Video](#)





# Common Infractions: Freestyle

- Head did not break surface of water by 15 meter mark
- Walking on/springing from bottom
- No touch at turn





# Technical Rules: Backstroke

## Start

- In water facing start end with both hands on gutter or starting grips.
  - A. Guttered pool- Feet/toes may be above the water, but may not be in, on, above lip, or bent over the gutter at any time before or after start.
  - B. Flat wall pads- Feet/toes may be placed above the water level.
  - C. When using backstroke ledges- The toes of both feet must be in contact with the wall

## Stroke/Kick

- Any style as long as swimmer remains on the back. Must break surface throughout the race except swimmer may be submerged after start and each turn not more than 15 meters where head must break surface.



# Technical Rules: Backstroke (cont.)

## Turns

- During turn swimmer may go past vertical to the breast and may utilize a continuous single or continuous simultaneous double arm pull to initiate the turn.
- Some part of the swimmer must touch the wall at the completion of each length.
- Shoulders at or past vertical toward back when feet leave wall.

## Finish

- Some part of swimmer must touch the wall while on the back.



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# Backstroke Video

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# Common Infractions: Backstroke

- Toes above lip of gutter after start
- Head did not break surface of water by 15 meter mark
- Shoulders past vertical towards breast
- Delay initiating arm pull
- Delay initiating turn
- Re-submerged



# Technical Rules: Butterfly

## Start

- Forward start

## Stroke

- Body kept on breast.
- Multiple kicks permitted but first arm pull must bring swimmer to the surface.
- Must break surface throughout the race except swimmer may be submerged after start and each turn not more than 15 meters where head must break surface.
- Arms, shoulder to wrist, brought forward over water and pulled back simultaneously.



# Technical Rules: Butterfly (cont.)

## Kick

- Simultaneous up and down movement.
- No alternating, scissors, or breaststroke kicking movements.

## Turns/Finish

- Shoulders at or past vertical toward breast when the swimmer leaves the wall.
- Touch should be made with both hands separated and simultaneous at, above, or below the water surface.



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# Butterfly Video

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# Common Infractions: Butterfly

- Head did not break surface of water by 15 meter mark
- Alternating kick
- Breaststroke kick
- Scissors kick
- Non-simultaneous arms
- Underwater recovery
- One hand touch
- Non-simultaneous touch





# Technical Rules: Breaststroke

## Start

- Forward start.

## Stroke

- Body kept on breast.
- Stroke cycle is one arm pull and one leg kick in that order.
- Simultaneous arm movement in same horizontal plane.
- After start and each turn one arm stroke may be completely back to legs. Head must break surface at widest part of second pull.
- Recovery by the hands from the breast-on, under, or over the water. Elbows under water except last stroke before turn or finish.



# Technical Rules: Breaststroke (cont.)

## Kick

- After start and each turn, prior to the first breaststroke kick, a single butterfly kick is permitted.
- Movement of the legs shall be simultaneous vertically and horizontally.
- Feet turned out during propulsive part of kick.
- No alternating, scissors, or butterfly kick, except as stated, is allowed.

## Turns/Finish

- Shoulders at or past vertical toward breast when feet leave wall.
- Touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.
- At the last stroke before the turn and at the finish an arm stroke not followed by a leg kick is permitted.
- 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 stroke cycle preceding the touch.



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# Breaststroke Video

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# Common Infractions: Breaststroke

- Head did not break surface of water by widest part of second stroke
- Butterfly kick
- Scissors kick
- Alternating kick
- Arms past hipline
- Arms not in same horizontal plane
- One hand touch
- Non-simultaneous touch



# Technical Rules: Individual Medley

## Start

- Forward start

## Stroke/Kick

- Rules for each stroke apply.
- Must swim  $\frac{1}{4}$  of event distance as prescribed in stroke, in order of Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle.
- May not swim in the style of the other three strokes during the freestyle leg.

## Turns/Finish

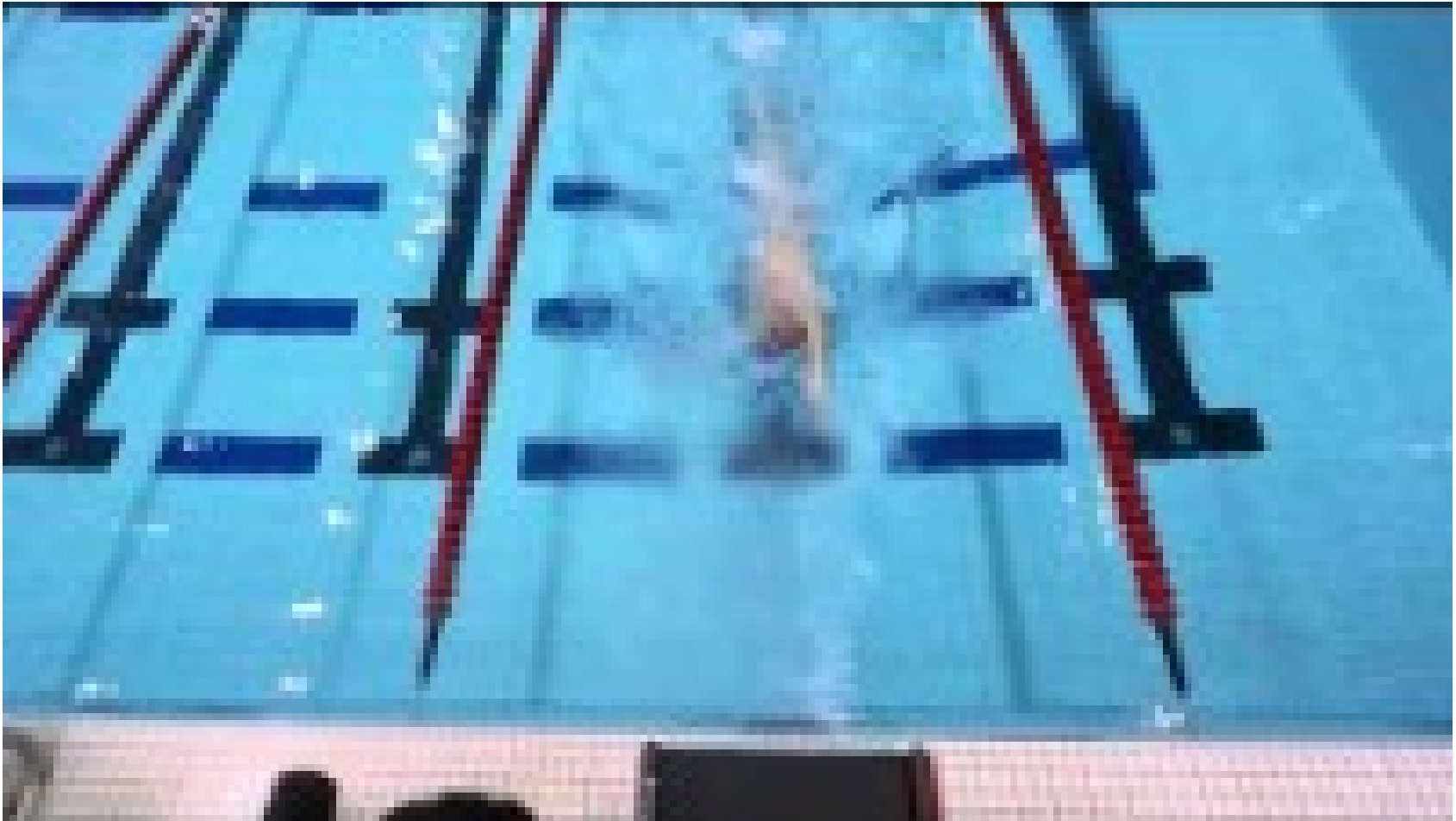
- Intermediate turns conform to the turn rules for the stroke.
- Transition turns conform to the finish rules for the stroke.



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# Individual Medley Video

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# Common Infractions: Individual Medley

- Swimming more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the race in the style of butterfly, backstroke, or breaststroke

# Technical Rules: Relays

## Freestyle Relay

- Freestyle rules apply.
- Each swimmer must swim  $\frac{1}{4}$  of distance.

## Medley Relay

- Rules pertaining to each stroke apply.
- Each swimmer must swim  $\frac{1}{4}$  of event distance as prescribed stroke, in order of Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, and Freestyle.
- May not swim in the style of the other three strokes during the freestyle leg.

## Takeoffs

- Swimmer's feet/foot must remain in contact with the starting platform until the incoming swimmer has touched the finish wall or pad.





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# Relay Video

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# Common Infractions: Relays

- Early takeoff
- Swimming more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the race in the style of butterfly, backstroke, or breaststroke (if a medley relay)



# Pursuing Certification

- **On-Deck Training**
  - Link to the S&T apprentice form [HERE](#) from MNSI – Officials website
  - Track your 5 shadow sessions and progress to becoming an official!
- **Online Testing**
  - Once registered with USA Swimming, log in to access the online testing [HERE](#) from the USA Swimming – Officials website.
- **USA Swimming Non-Athlete Membership**
  - Ask your club if they take care of this for you!
- **Background Check**
  - Complete a background check [HERE](#). This may take a few days and there is a cost. Check to see if your club will cover it for you.
- **Athlete Protection Training**
  - Link to training [HERE](#). This takes time to complete and follow the instructions to finish it and receive credit!
- **Concussion Protocol Training**
  - Complete NFHS ([Here](#)) or CDC ([Here](#)) course.
  - Email completion certificate to MNSI office (bvonderharr@mns swim.org) NOT the Officials chair.

The background features a large, light gray watermark of the USA Swimming logo. The logo consists of a shield with a white star in the center, surrounded by red and white stripes. The word "USA" is written in large, red, serif letters across the top of the shield, and the word "SWIMMING" is written in large, gray, sans-serif letters across the middle. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the bottom right of the shield.

# QUESTIONS?

Jack Swanson = [MNOfficialsChair@gmail.com](mailto:MNOfficialsChair@gmail.com)

Rebecca Binder = [RnRbinder@gmail.com](mailto:RnRbinder@gmail.com)



# Appendix: Definitions

- **Arm:** That part of the body that extends from the shoulder to the wrist
- **Body:** The torso, including the shoulders and hips
- **Finish:** The instant that a swimmer touches the wall at the end of the prescribed distance
- **Horizontal:** Parallel to the surface of the water
- **May:** Permissive, not mandatory
- **On the Back:** Position of the body when the shoulders are at or past vertical towards the back
- **On the Breast:** Position of the body when the shoulders are at or past vertical towards the breast



## Appendix: Definitions (cont.)

- Propulsive: Having the power to propel
- Scissor Kick: Use of the top of the instep of one foot and the bottom of the other foot in the propulsive part of the kick
- Shall: Mandatory
- Simultaneously: Occurring at the same time
- Touch: Contact with the end of the course
- Turn: A point where the swimmers reverse or change direction
- Vertical: Perpendicular to the water surface
- Wall: Vertical portion of the pool, contiguous surfaces of the deck and overflow gutter, the front portion of the starting block or platform, or the touchpad at the end of the course