

# SSSL Stroke Rules

## **Breaststroke:**

At the start of the race, the swimmer may take one arm pull past the hips and one leg kick, in that order, while completely submerged. After the first arm pull under water, the arms may not move past the hips. The head must break the surface of the water by the time the arms start inward from the widest point of the second arm pull. From the beginning of the first arm stroke the body shall be kept on the breast and the arms shall be in the same horizontal plane. The head must break the surface of the water during each stroke cycle.

The arms must move in the same horizontal plane with no alternating movement, but the position of the shoulders is irrelevant. During the recovery movement, the hands may be at, above or below the water surface, but must be pushed forward from the breast. The elbows must stay in contact with the water during the recovery phase of the arm pull throughout the race except for the last stroke at the finish and into the turns.

All vertical and lateral motion of the legs shall be simultaneous. The position of the toes is the key to judging the breaststroke kick. If the toes are pointed out during the propulsive part of the kick, it is a legal breaststroke kick. There shall be no scissors, flutter or downward butterfly kick, except a single butterfly kick is permissible after the start and each turn. It must occur *after* the initiation of the first arm pull and must be followed by a breaststroke kick. Breaking the surface of the water with feet is not a DQ unless accompanied by a distinctive downward butterfly kick.

At the turns and the finish, a two hand simultaneous touch is required. After the final pull into the wall at the turns and finish, the arms no longer need to be in the same horizontal plane, however, the shoulders do have to be at or past vertical towards the breast when the feet leave the wall at each turn and again at the finish.

## **Butterfly:**

After the start and each turn, the swimmer's shoulders shall be at or past vertical towards the breast. The swimmer may take as many kicks as they want, but when they begin their first arm pull, that pull must bring them to the surface of the water. The head must break the surface of the water before the 15 meter mark and some part of the body must remain on the surface of the water throughout the swim, except for the first 15 meters after each turn. During the swim, the arms must recover simultaneously over the water surface and be pulled back simultaneously.

All movement of the legs and feet shall be simultaneous. There shall be no alternating, scissors or breaststroke kick.

At the turns and finish, there shall be a simultaneous two hand touch.

## SSSL Stroke Rules (cont.)

### Backstroke:

Immediately following the start, standing in or curling toes over the lip of the gutter is not permitted. The swimmer must be at or past vertical towards the back during the swim. The head must break the surface of the water before the 15 meter mark after the start and each turn. Any stroke and kick is permitted.

At each turn, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. After the swimmer's head has passed under the backstroke flags, the swimmer may turn the shoulders past vertical towards the breast before the touch is completed, provided the rotation is either accompanied by an initiation of the turning action, or a continuation into the wall.

The initiation of the turning action is accomplished by the execution of a single or simultaneous double arm pull, or in the absence of such pulls, by a downward, underwater movement of the head. After initiation of the turning action, no additional arm pulls may be started; *however, kicking and gliding actions are permitted.*

The swimmer's shoulders must be at or past the vertical towards the back when their feet leave the wall after each turn and they must touch the wall at the finish while on the back.

### Freestyle:

The swimmer may choose to swim any style they want, but their head must break the surface of the water before the 15 meter mark and some part of the swimmer's body must remain on the water surface throughout the race, except for the first 15 meter after each turn. Some part of the swimmer's body must touch the wall at the end of each length of the swim.

### Individual Medley / Medley Relay:

The Individual Medley is swum in the following order: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle. The Medley Relay is Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Freestyle. Freestyle is any stroke *other* than the previous three.

Each leg of the race shall be judged by the rules pertaining to that stroke. The transition from one stroke to another is *not* considered a turn - each transition shall conform to the *finish* rules of the stroke just completed.



# **SSSL Stroke Rules (cont.)**

## **Relay Take-Offs:**

Watch the feet of the swimmer on the block. When the feet of the swimmer on the block leave the starting platform, look down to see if the incoming swimmer has touched the wall. If so, then the exchange is good and you should circle the outgoing swimmer's number on the relay take-off slip. If the exchange is bad, put an X through the number of the swimmer who took off early. Do not raise your hand for an early take-off until the last swimmer of the last-place team has entered the water.

## **Jurisdiction:**

This is the term that refers to the portion of the swim each judge is responsible for. This can differ very much depending upon the level of meet and the number of available officials. For the SSSL dual meets, you will most likely have two judges, one on each side of the pool. Each judge will be responsible for judging the three lanes on their half of the pool, for the length of the pool. You may only call a violation that occurs in your jurisdiction. Conversely, you may not call a violation if it is not in your jurisdiction, even if the responsible judge does not make the call. This is done to be fair to all swimmers and not "dual" judge them by having two judges scrutinizing the swimmer(s) who happen to be in the area where both judges can see them. Your jurisdiction can change depending upon the number of lanes, judges, and the level of the meet.

## **Protocol:**

This is one of the most important parts of your job. While this is not a National Championship meet, we should still perform our duties in a serious manner. That means being attentive and not looking bored or uninterested, regardless of whether you are or not! You should always give every swim and every swimmer the same amount of scrutiny, regardless of the skill level of the swimmer or the event as a whole. Each swimmer in your jurisdiction should get an equal amount of scrutiny, even if there is only one swimmer and you have three lanes to watch. In that case, you watch the empty lanes just as much as the one with the swimmer in it. That way, if you are responsible for three lanes, each swimmer gets your attention for one-third of the time they are in your jurisdiction.

You should also try to maintain the same relative position as your counterpart across the pool; ie. Each of you watches the butterfly start from the backstroke flags. Again, this is to ensure that each judge is watching the swimmers from the same relative vantage point on the pool deck and no swimmer gets watched more closely (or less closely) than the others.

## **SSSL Stroke Rules (cont.)**

Finally, and most important, how do you make a call? When you see the violation, you ***MUST*** raise your hand vertically over your head, which notifies the referee you have a violation. If there is a referee, you must keep your hand up long enough for that person to make eye contact with you. Once that has been done, you may lower your hand. ***DON'T FORGET, HOWEVER, TO KEEP WATCHING THE OTHER SWIMMERS, AND THE ONE YOU JUST MADE THE CALL ON!!!!***

If you are in doubt about what you saw, it didn't happen! You must be positive, and in any case, if you have a question, the swimmer gets the benefit of the doubt. There is nothing wrong with withdrawing a disqualification if you develop a doubt after raising your hand.

Once you have made the call, you should record the disqualification (this procedure differs depending upon the meet). Record as much as is possible on the card or DQ slip so the coach will know what it was you called. Often, coaches don't see the violation, and they sometimes don't know the rule, either!

The majority of this protocol stuff will be covered at the official's briefing before the meet, but don't hesitate to ask the meet director or referee any questions you may have.

Last, but certainly not least, appearance is very important! High school rules require officials to wear white and I agree with that. If we start out looking like officials, we will most likely be received that way as well. We have all been in the position of having been judged at some point in our lives, and I think you would agree that the judge who looks like a slob is most likely seen as judging that way also. Please try to look and act the part, and we will give the swimmers a meet they can be proud of!

Any questions? Feel free to contact me and I will be glad to help you. Welcome to the rewarding job of being a swim meet official, and I'll see you on the deck!

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