



Aqua Culture Swim Team

A parent run, recreational swim team participating in the Harford Swim League

Aqua Culture Guidance for Stroke & Turn Judges

A. Philosophy

1. Thank you for volunteering. HSL cannot exist without competent officials. Officiating is very rewarding and educational. Aqua Culture Swim Team has the advantage of an active parent volunteer system which includes a large number of officials. New and inexperienced S&T officials are strongly encouraged to shadow experienced officials.
2. Your primary job is to ensure all swimmers have a fair and equitable opportunity to swim their best. You are there to observe the swimmers, not look for disqualifications. However, if you observe a violation, you must DQ the swimmer.
3. You must take your job seriously; understand the rules and how they are applied. An annual certification is required, consisting of attendance at a clinic for your position, unless specifically waived by the Head of Officials. More experienced officials in the League are available and willing to help you with any questions or rule interpretations.
4. Call only what you see; not what you don't see. If you are not sure, do not make the call; the benefit of the doubt always goes to the swimmer. Be confident and consistent in your calls. Do not be concerned that you might be DQ'ing your best friend's child; it is your obligation if you see a violation. The coaches and swimmers know that DQ's are not to be taken personally.
5. Have fun and make the meet enjoyable for the swimmers and spectators. Remember, you're there for the kids. If you cannot work comfortably with others or are difficult to get along with, you don't belong here.

B. Prior to Meet

1. Review technical rules the night before or when convenient prior to the meet. Remember USS rules apply.
2. Suggested attire is a white shirt and dark blue shorts (or long pants); look professional. Please come prepared for the weather. It is not appropriate for an official to wear a jacket the obscures their role as an official. The Admin official needs to be able to quickly identify the working officials.
3. Arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the meet. Report to the Starter/Referee and identify yourself as a Stroke & Turn judge.
4. Attend the pre-meet officials meeting with the Referee and other officials. At this meeting, the Referee will review the technical rules, positioning and jurisdiction, and issue any special instructions regarding the conduct of the meet.
5. Be present at your assigned position 5 minutes prior to the beginning of the meet.

C. During the Meet

1. Know your assigned jurisdiction and focus your attention only on that area. You cannot make a call outside of your jurisdiction. Jurisdiction and positioning are up to the Starter/Referee, and may vary from pool to pool. Your primary job is to ensure all swimmers have a fair and equitable opportunity to swim their best. **You are there to observe the swimmers, not look for disqualifications.** However, if you observe a

violation, you must DQ the swimmer. There should be no coaching of swimmers at all since even helpful coaching can be confusing during the event. Telling a swimmer that you “almost DQ’ed” and explaining why.

2. Give swimmers in your jurisdiction your undivided attention. Be consistent in your officiating. Do not get “stricter” as the swimmers get older. Our goal as a team of officials to make calls consistently across the pool. Avoid any distractions such as casual conversations with spectators, coaches, etc. If you are being shadowed by a less experienced official wait until after the event to discuss calls and possible infractions. Shadowing officials do not make or suggest calls to the working official; this would result in over officiating of the jurisdiction covered by both a S&T and a shadow.
3. It is inappropriate to cheer while you are in uniform.
4. Always be aware of the appropriate heat of the swimmers in the water. This is extremely important in order to avoid disqualification of the wrong swimmer. Use a meet sheet and repeatedly confirm the heat number via the voice commands of the starter.
5. Spend an equivalent amount of time judging each lane in your jurisdiction, INCLUDING LANES WITH NO SWIMMERS. This will avoid undue over scrutiny of swimmers in incomplete heats.
6. All disqualifications in HSL are subject to **confirmation** by the Admin official. The swimmer is always given the benefit of the doubt. A “no call” is far better than an inappropriate disqualification.
7. Don’t call what you can’t or don’t see. For example, in the simultaneous 2-hand touch turn/finish rule for breaststroke and butterfly events, don’t assume that a one-hand touch has occurred if only one hand touches above the waterline. You must see the position of both hands, i.e. you must see the hand miss the wall, track the swimmer into the wall do not try to catch the swimmer as they hit the wall. (Note: Due to the height and construction of the wall and deck at Conowingo, officials need to lean forward to observe the touch properly.)
8. If you observe a potential infraction, you must immediately signal a disqualification by raising a hand overhead, if possible stand next to the lane of the swimmer with the potential disqualification. This is very helpful to coaches and parents since they are very interested whenever they see your hand go up.
9. If the disqualification is confirmed by the Admin Referee note the infraction on your meet sheet. At the completion of the heat, must make sure that the DQ is recorded on the timers sheet. Do not record the DQ until all swimmers have completed their swim so you can observe all of the swimmers uniformly. When recording the DQ infraction, pay attention to the identification of the swimmer by virtue of event, heat, and lane. If there are multiple heats for an event there will be multiple swimmers on the time sheet and it is important not to DQ the wrong swimmer. Make sure the proper infraction(s) is noted on the timer sheet. In the event of multiple infractions, make sure each is indicated. Please attempt to notify the swimmer of the DQ infraction. In some instances your note on the time sheet will be your only communication with the swimmer via the coach. Since a principal reason for stroke and turn judging is to provide the swimmer with constructive evaluation of illegal stroke technique in order to make the appropriate corrections for future competitions, make sure each infraction is explicitly described. Additional narrative comments are encouraged as a means of providing further clarification. Do not worry that

a coach will be upset over a DQ; the dual confirmation is insurance that the call is likely correct. Most coaches will welcome DQ's as a means to reinforce what he's been telling a swimmer to do properly. You are not the bad guy.

10. Rotate at the time and manner directed by the Starter. For those events which typically result in a greater number of potential disqualification infractions additional officials should make themselves available to assist with recording on timesheets and notifying swimmers.
11. Do not engage in conversation with any swimmer, parent, or coach over judging or calls. Let the Admin Official handle any problems. All questions and concerns should be directed to the Admin Official through the respective coach. If the Admin Official asks you to do something different, do not take it personally, and heed his instruction.
12. Freestyle relay take-offs and turns are also judged by dual confirmation. The final placement of judges is at the discretion of the Starter/Referee. Each judge is separated from their partner, one observing from low to high numbered lanes and the other from high to low. Each judge watches takeoffs in all lanes. In observing for early take-off, you should watch the feet of the swimmer on the block or wall first; when the feet lose contact with the block or wall, immediately look for the touch of the incoming swimmer. If the incoming swimmer has not yet made contact with the wall, an early take-off is observed. Note the lane, team, and swimmer number (e.g, swimmer number 3 on the relay). If you observe an early takeoff, **do not raise your hand**. Instead, after completion of the relay, the two judges compare notes to see if there is a consensus as to the swimmer and the lane; no conversation need occur. If you both agree on one or more early takeoffs, a hand signal is given at that time to indicate a disqualification. You must both agree on the lane and which swimmer or there is no disqualification. With the exception of the first relay swimmer, who must remain stationary at the start, the other relay swimmers may be in motion but must have at least one foot on the edge of the deck or wall prior to starting (i.e., no running, walking, etc., starts).

ACST STROKE BRIEFING

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FREESTYLE

Start- The **forward** start shall be used.

Stroke- The swimmer may choose to swim any style they want but their head must break the surface of the water by the 15 meter mark. (since we do not use side judges use backstroke flags at the far end from the start or turn to identify those swimmers who obviously exceed the 15 meter mark)

Some part of the body must remain on the water surface throughout the race except for the first 15 meters after the start and after each turn.

Turns and Finish- Some part of the swimmer's body must touch the wall at the end of each length of the swim.

BREASTSTROKE

Start- A **forward** start must be used

Stroke- At the start of the race and after each turn, the swimmer may take one arm pull completely back to the legs and one single butterfly kick followed by a breaststroke kick, in that order, while completely submerged. The head must break the surface of the water by the time the arms have reached the widest part of the second arm pull.

Throughout the race the **stroke cycle** must be **one arm stroke and one leg kick** in that order. 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 with no alternating movement**.

The hands must be pushed forward from the breast, on under or over the water.

The elbows must stay in contact with the water during the recovery phase of the arm stroke throughout the race except for the last stroke at the turn and finish.

The only time the hands may be brought back beyond the hipline is during the first arm pull after the start and each turn.

During each complete cycle, some part of the swimmers head shall break the surface of the water.

Kick- All movements of the legs shall be **simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement**.

The **position of the toes** is 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. If the feet are dropping with the toes still turned in while the knees are pulling up during the recovery it is illegal.

There shall be no scissors, flutter, or downward butterfly kick, except that a single butterfly kick may occur immediately after the start and after each turn prior to or simultaneously with the first arm pull followed by a breaststroke kick. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is not a disqualification unless accompanied by a downward butterfly kick.

Turns and Finish- At the turns and the finish, a **two hand simultaneous touch** is required at, above or below the surface of the water. 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.

BACKSTROKE

Start- Swimmers will be **in the water** facing the start end with both hands placed on the gutter or starting grips. Immediately following the start, standing in or curling the toes over the lip of the gutter is not permitted.

Swim- The swimmer must be at or past vertical **towards the back** during the swim.

The head must break the surface of the water by the 15 meter mark and some part of the body must remain on the water surface throughout the swim, except for the first 15 meters after each turn and at the finish. (use backstroke flags as a mark)

Turns- At each turn, **some part of the swimmer must touch the wall.**

The swimmer may turn past the vertical towards the breast at which time they may execute a single or simultaneous double arm pull, which may be used to initiate the turn. The swimmer must be towards the back when the feet leave the wall after each turn.

Finish- The swimmer must **touch** the wall **while on the back.**

BUTTERFLY

Start- The **forward** start must be used

Stroke- After the start and after each turn, the swimmer's shoulders shall be at or past vertical towards the breast.

The swimmer is permitted one or more kicks, but only one arm pull underwater which must bring them to the surface of the water.

The head must break the surface of the water by the 15 meter mark after the start and after each turn and some part of the body must remain on the water surface throughout the swim. (Note: in HSL it is unlikely someone will be posted at the 15 M mark to determine this. However, the call can be made by the S&T judges if it is an obvious violation, e.g., the swimmer comes up at the backstroke flags.)

During the swim, the **arms must recover simultaneously over** the water surface. There shall be no underwater recovery. (does not have to be symmetrical-but does have to be simultaneous)

Kick- All movements of the **legs and feet shall be simultaneous.** The position of the legs or feet need not be on the same level, but shall not alternate in relation to each other. There shall be no alternating, scissors, or breaststroke kick.

Turns- At each turn the body shall be on the breast. There shall be a **two hand simultaneous touch** at, above or below the surface of the water. Once a touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner desired. The shoulders must be past vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall.

Finish- The body shall be on the breast and there shall be a **two hand simultaneous touch** at, above or below the surface of the water.

RELAYS

The swimmers must swim in the order specified on the timer sheet.

A relay team shall be disqualified if a member of the teams enters the water for his/her leg before the previous swimmer has touched the wall. **Watch the feet on the block, then look down to wall to see that swimmer has touched.**

The 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th swimmer may be in motion prior to starting, but may not take more than one step from his/her starting position before entering the water. **If second swimmer is starting in the water, judgment of early take off will be from the hand leaving the wall.**

DISQUALIFICATIONS

- Any infraction of a stroke and turn rule is a disqualification
- Unsportsmanlike conduct shall merit disqualification or other appropriate action by the meet director
- A swimmer must start and finish in the same lane.
- Standing on the bottom during a freestyle race shall not disqualify a swimmer, but a swimmer must not leave the pool, or walk, or spring from the bottom. Standing on the bottom during any other stroke (except during the turn) shall result in a disqualification.
- Obstructing another swimmer shall disqualify the offender.
- Any swimmer not entered in a race who enters the pool or course in the area in which said race is being conducted before all swimmers therein have completed the race shall be barred from the next individual race in which that swimmer is entered.
- Should a foul endanger the chance of success of a swimmer, the meet director may allow the affected swimmer to re-swim the event.
- No swimmer is permitted to wear or use any device or substance to help his/her speed or buoyancy during a race.
- Grasping lane dividers to assist forward motion is not permitted.

Remember- ugly is not illegal!