

# USA SWIMMING STROKE AND TURN REGULATIONS

## Breaststroke

## Butterfly

## Backstroke

## Freestyle

## Individual Medley

## Relays

### 101.1 BREASTSTROKE

#### .1 Start

- The forward start shall be used.

#### .2 Stroke

- From the beginning of the first armstroke after the start and after each turn, the body shall be kept on the breast.
- The arms shall move simultaneously and in the same horizontal plane without any alternating movement.
- The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast, on, under, or over the water.
- The elbows shall be under the water except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and the last stroke at the finish of the prescribed distance.
- The hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water.
- The hands shall not be brought beyond the hipline, except during the first stroke after the start and each turn.
- Some part of the swimmer's head shall break the surface of the water at least once during each complete cycle of one arm stroke and one leg kick, in that order, except after the start and each turn the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs and one leg kick while wholly submerged.
- The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke.

#### .3 Kick

- All vertical and lateral movements of the legs shall be simultaneous.
- The feet must be turned outward during the propulsive part of the kick movement.
- A scissors, flutter, or downward butterfly kick is not permitted.
- Breaking the surface with the feet shall not merit disqualification unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.

#### .4 Turns

- At each turn, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.
- 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 any part of the last complete or incomplete cycle preceding the touch.
- Once the touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner desired.
- The shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall and the form prescribed in .2 above must be attained from the beginning of the first arm stroke.

#### .5 Finish

- At the finish, the body shall be on the breast and the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.
  - 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 any part of the last complete or incomplete stroke cycle preceding the touch.
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### 101.2 BUTTERFLY

#### .1 Start

- The forward start shall be used.

## **.2 Stroke**

- After the start and after each turn, the swimmer's shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast.
- The swimmer is permitted one or more leg kicks, but only one arm pull under water, which must bring him to the surface.
- It shall be permissible for a swimmer to be completely submerged for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and after each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface.
- The swimmer must remain on the surface until the next turn or finish.
- From the beginning of the first arm pull, the body shall be kept on the breast.
- Both arms must be brought forward over the water and pulled back simultaneously.

## **.3 Kick**

- All up and down movements of the legs and feet must be simultaneous.
- The position of the legs or the feet need not be on the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other.
- A scissors or breaststroke kicking movement is not permitted.

## **.4 Turns**

- At each turn, the body shall be on the breast.
- The touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.
- Once a touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner desired.
- The shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall.

## **.5 Finish**

- At the finish, the body shall be on the breast and the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.

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## **101.3 BACKSTROKE**

### **.1 Start**

- A. The swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grips.
- B. Prior to the command "take your mark" and until the feet leave the wall at the starting signal, the swimmer's feet, including the toes, shall be placed under the surface of the water. Standing in or on the gutter or curling toes over the lip of the gutter is not permitted at any time before the start. A backstroke starting block may not be used.

### **.2 Stroke**

- Standing in or on the gutter or curling the toes over the lip of the gutter immediately after the start is not permitted.
- The swimmer shall push off on his back and continue swimming on the back throughout the race.
- Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn, at the finish, and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface of the water.

### **.3 Turns**

- Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall.
- During the turn the shoulders may be turned past the vertical toward the breast after which a continuous single arm pull or a continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to execute the turn.
- Once the body has left the position on the back, any kick or arm pull must be part of the continuous turning action.

- The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall.

#### **.4 Finish**

- Upon the finish of the race, the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back. The body may be submerged at the touch.
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### **101.4 FREESTYLE**

#### **.1 Start**

- The forward start shall be used.

#### **.2 Stroke**

- In the event designated freestyle the swimmer may swim any style, except that in a medley relay or an individual medley event, freestyle means any style other than butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke.
- Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point the head must have broken the surface.

#### **.3 Turns**

- Upon completion of each length the swimmer must touch the wall.

#### **.4 Finish**

- The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his person touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance.
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**101.5 INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY** - The swimmer shall swim the prescribed distance in the following order: the first one-fourth, butterfly; the second one-fourth, backstroke; the third one-fourth, breaststroke; and the last one-fourth, freestyle.

#### **.1 Start**

- The forward start shall be used.

#### **.2 Stroke**

- The stroke for each one-fourth of the designated distance shall follow the prescribed rules for that stroke.

#### **.3 Turns**

- A. Intermediate turns within each stroke shall conform to the turn rules for that stroke.
- B. The turns when changing from one stroke to another shall conform to the finish rules for the stroke just completed, and shall be as follows:
  1. **Butterfly to Backstroke** - The swimmer must touch as described in [101.2.5](#). Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner, but the shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the back when the swimmer leaves the wall.

2. **Backstroke to Breaststroke** - The swimmer must touch the wall while on the back. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner but the shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall and the prescribed breaststroke form must be attained prior to the first arm stroke.
3. **Breaststroke to Freestyle** - The swimmer must touch as described in 101.1.5. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner.

#### **.4 Finish**

- The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his/her person touches the wall after the prescribed distance.
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### **101.6 RELAYS**

**.1 Freestyle Relay** - Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke(s). Freestyle finish rules apply.

**.2 Medley Relay** - Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance continuously in the following order: first, backstroke; second, breaststroke; third, butterfly; and fourth, freestyle. Rules pertaining to each stroke used shall govern where applicable. At the end of each leg, the finish rule for each stroke applies in each case.

#### **.3 Rules Pertaining to Relay Races.**

- A. No swimmer shall swim more than one leg in any relay event.
- B. When automatic relay take-off judging is used, each swimmer must touch the touchplate or pad in his/her lane at the end of the course to have finished his/her leg of the relay race.
- C. In relay races a swimmer other than the first swimmer shall not start until his/her teammate has concluded his/her leg.
- D. Any relay team member and his/her relay team shall be disqualified from a race if a team member other than the swimmer designated to swim that leg shall jump into or enter the pool in the area where the race is being conducted before all swimmers of all teams have finished the race.
- E. Each relay team member shall leave the water immediately upon finishing his/her leg, except the last member.
- F. In relay races the team of a swimmer whose feet have lost touch with the starting platform (ground or deck) before his/her preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified.