

Technical Rules

Individual Strokes and Relays

THE START

- A. At the start of each heat, the Referee shall signal the swimmers by a short series of whistles, to remove all clothing except for swimwear, followed by a long whistle, indicating that they should take and maintain their positions on the starting platform, the deck or in the water.
- B. When the swimmers and officials are ready, the Referee shall signal with an outstretched arm to the Starter that the swimmers are under the Starter's control.
- C. On the Starter's command "take your mark", the swimmers shall immediately assume their starting position, in the forward start, with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform or the deck. Swimmers starting in the water must have at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting platform. When swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal.
- D. When a swimmer does not respond promptly to the command "take your mark" the Starter shall immediately release all swimmers with the command "stand up" upon which the swimmers may stand up or step off the blocks.

BREASTSTROKE

1. **START** – the forward start shall be used.
2. **STROKE** – After the start and after each turn, when the swimmer leaves the wall, the body shall be kept on the breast. It is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time. Throughout the race the stroke cycle must be one arm stroke and one leg kick in that order.

All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plan without alternating movement.

The hands shall be pushed forward from the breast on, under, or over the water. The elbows shall be under water except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and for the final stroke at the finish. All hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water. The hands shall not be brought back beyond the hip line, except during the first stroke after the start and each turn.

During each complete cycle, some part of the swimmer's head shall break the surface of the water. After the start and after each turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke.

3. **KICK** – After the start of each turn, a single butterfly kick, which must be followed by a breaststroke kick, is permitted during or at the completion of the first arm pull. Following which all movements of the legs shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movements.

The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. A scissors, flutter or downward butterfly kick is not permitted. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.

4. **TURNS and FINISH** – At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water level. The

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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.

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 the swimmer to the surface. It is 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.

BACKSTROKE

1. **START** – The swimmer shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter, placing the toes above the lip of the gutter or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter before or after the start is prohibited.
2. **STROKE** – 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 is 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 after 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 simultaneous double arm pull may be used to initiate the turn. The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall.

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4. **FINISH** – Upon the finish of the race, the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back.

FREESTYLE

1. **START** – The forward start shall be used.
2. **STROKE** – In an event, designated freestyle, the swimmer may swim any style. 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 completely the distance.

INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

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 of that stroke.
3. **TURNS**
 - a. Turns within each stroke shall conform to the turn rules of that stroke.
 - b. The turns when changing from one stroke to another shall conform to the finish rules for the stroke just completed, as follows;
 - i. Butterfly to Backstroke – refer to Butterfly section 5
 - ii. Backstroke to Breaststroke – refer to Backstroke section 4
 - iii. Breaststroke to Freestyle – refer to Breaststroke section 4
4. **FINISH** – The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of the body touches the wall after the prescribed distance.

RELAY

1. **Freestyle Relay** – Four swimmers on each team, each swims one-fourth of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke. Freestyle finish rules apply.
2. **Medley Relay** – Four swimmers on each team, each swims one-fourth of the prescribed distance, in the following order:
 - a. **Backstroke**
 - b. **Breaststroke**
 - c. **Butterfly**

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d. Freestyle

Rules pertaining to each stroke shall be used. At the end of each leg, the finish rules for each stroke applies.

3. Rules for Relay Races

- a. No swimmer shall swim more than one leg in any relay event.
- b. Each swimmer must touch the wall in his/her lane at the end of the course to have finished that leg of the relay race.
- c. A swimmer other than the first swimmer shall not start until his/her teammate has concluded his/her leg of the relay race.
- d. A relay team shall be disqualified from a race if a team member other than the designed swimmer of that leg, enters 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. The team of a swimmer whose feet have lost touch with the starting platform before his/her preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified.
- g. For in-water-starts, the team of a swimmer who has lost touch with the end of the course before his/her preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified, unless the swimmer in default returns to the original starting point at the wall.