

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Stroke & Turn

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

Breaststroke

1. A breaststroke swimmer moves his hands in a sculling or flipper movement at the end of the first armstroke after the start and also after the turn. Should he be disqualified?

Recommended Resolution: No, he should not be disqualified. This is legal provided "The arms shall move simultaneously and in the same horizontal plane without any alternating movement." A sculling motion of the hands only as part of the armstroke is not considered the beginning of a new stroke.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.2

2. In a 9-10 100-yard breaststroke event, a swimmer completes 50 yards and, thinking that the race is over, pushes back from the wall to read the scoreboard. At this point, realizing that the race is only halfway over, the swimmer returns to the wall, then pushes off on the breast and completes the required distance in good form. What, if any, call should be made?

Recommended Resolution: The swimmer left the wall, probably on the back, and then returned to the wall before resuming the stroke. One violation that could be called would be that the swimmer was not on the breast when leaving the wall. Additional violations could include the arm stroke not being simultaneous depending on what was observed by the judge.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.4, 101.1.2

3. In a breaststroke turn, the swimmer touches with his left hand and then touches immediately after with his right hand. The turn judge raises a hand, signaling a disqualification. The coach argues that the turn is legal because both hands were on the wall at the same time. Does the disqualification stand?

Recommended Resolution: Yes, the rule is very clear. USA Swimming Rules and Regulations states, "At each turn, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously...." Therefore, the hands must touch at the same time, not one after the other.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.4

4. A swimmer says he sprained his ankle and cannot turn his foot out in the breaststroke kick. Should he be disqualified if he does not turn his toes out in the propulsive part of the kick?

Recommended Resolution: Yes. This does not qualify as a disability, which is defined in Article 105 as "a permanent physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities." No exception to the breaststroke rule is, therefore, warranted.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.3, 105.1, 105.5

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Breaststroke

5. While swimming the breaststroke, a swimmer touches the wall at the turn with both hands at the same time. However, the swimmer's left hand was at the top of the wall while his right hand touched well below the surface of the water. The turn judge raised her hand and the swimmer was disqualified. Was the call correct?

Recommended Resolution: No, the call was not correct. The breaststroke turn rule states that "the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface." This allows the swimmers hands to be on different levels when they touch the wall. They still need to touch the wall at the same time. The same is true for the touch at the finish of the race.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.4, 101.1.5

6. In a senior 100-yard breaststroke event, the turn judge recommends a disqualification because the swimmer in lane 2 was not on his breast when leaving the wall at the first turn. Upon quizzing the turn judge about what was observed, the referee determines that the judge observed the following sequence of events:
- The turn judge picks up the swimmer in lane 2 as the swimmer is headed away from the wall
 - The turn judge sees that the swimmer is not on his breast
 - The turn judge shifts her eyes to the feet of the swimmer and sees that they are off the wall
 - The turn judge raises her hand.
- Should the swimmer be disqualified?

Recommended Resolution: The swimmer should not be disqualified. The rule requires that the "shoulders must be at or past the vertical towards the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall...." In the sequence that was described, it is possible that the swimmer's feet were still on the wall when the turn judge observed the swimmer not on the breast. By the time the turn judge's eyes had shifted to the feet of the swimmer, the swimmer had left the wall. To give the swimmer the benefit of the doubt, the turn judge must first observe the swimmer leave the wall and then check the position of the shoulders.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.4

7. Coach Smith is teaching his swimmers to do what he believes is a faster technique of getting to the wall on the breaststroke finish. He wants his swimmers, when they are inside of the backstroke flags, to stay completely under the water and not take any breaths. It takes several complete cycles while wholly submerged before the swimmers touch. Is this legal?

Recommended Resolution: No. During the swim 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. Also, at the turn and finish, 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.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.2, 101.1.4, 101.1.5

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Breaststroke

8. Because the elbows can come out of the water legally at the finish of the breaststroke, John's coach is telling him that the hands can only touch simultaneously while they are out of the water at the finish or turns. Is this correct?

Recommended Resolution: No. At each turn and the finish the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.4, 101.1.5

9. During the breaststroke, Bob was disqualified for a simultaneous touch with one hand under the water and one hand above the water but not in line with the water surface. He was on the breast at the finish. Is this a valid DQ?

Recommended Resolution: Bob should not have been disqualified and the DQ should be overturned. The touch may be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.3

10. When Peter left the wall at the first turn of the 50-yard breaststroke he was on his back and got disqualified. Should Peter have been disqualified?

Recommended Resolution: Yes, because he needs to be toward his breast when he leaves the wall.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.4

11. After a turn in the 100-yard breaststroke, Peter took his first stroke immediately after he turned, while his shoulders were past vertical toward the breast. Another official watching this action questioned why he was not disqualified. Can you make the call on this situation?

Recommended Resolution: Since Peter was toward his breast the key is whether the arms were in the same horizontal plane at their first stroke. As no observation was reported regarding the arms, there should be no disqualification.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.2, 101.1.4

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Breaststroke

12. At a novice meet, the Referee told the coach that the swimmer from his team swimming the breaststroke was disqualified because his body was not horizontal toward the breast when the first arm stroke began. Is this a correct disqualification for this stroke?

Recommended Resolution: This is incorrect. The rulebook states “from the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn, the body shall be kept on the breast.” The swimmer should not be disqualified.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.2

13. A swimmer swims her breaststroke so that her hands are completely under the water when the hands are pushed forward together from the breast. When she was an age group swimmer she was told that she could not recover with her hands and her arms out of the water. Is this correct?

Recommended Resolution: No, it is not. The hands may be recovered on, under, or over the water. The elbows need to stay under the water during the recovery portion of the stroke except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and the last stroke at the finish.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.2

14. To get further distance out of her breaststroke pulls, a young swimmer’s hands are brought all the way down to his legs on each pull. Is this legal?

Recommended Resolution: It is not legal. The hands shall not be brought beyond the hipline, except during the first stroke after the start and each turn.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.2

15. Although a breastroker’s head breaks the surface of the water during each cycle, she was disqualified at a recent meet for not taking a breath during each cycle. Is this a valid DQ?

Recommended Resolution: There is no requirement to breathe at any specific point of any swim. The rulebook states, “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.” There should be no disqualification

Applicable Rules: 101.1.2

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Breaststroke

16. After a deep forward start in the breaststroke, a swimmer takes one arm stroke completely back to his legs and then did a little butterfly kick to get closer to the surface of the water. He was disqualified. What is the rule that states the reason he was disqualified?

Recommended Resolution: A scissors, flutter, or downward butterfly kick is not permitted.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.3

17. An 8-year-old approaches the first turn in the 50-yard breaststroke. Prior to touching, he does a flip turn and pushes off the wall with both feet. Is this legal?

Recommended Resolution: No. The swimmer must touch the wall at the end of each length with both hands simultaneously. The swimmer should be disqualified.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.4

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Stroke & Turn

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

Butterfly

1. At the turn in a 50-yard butterfly event, the turn judge recommends a disqualification for a one-hand touch. Upon quizzing the turn judge, the chief judge determines that the turn judge observed three swimmers in his jurisdiction come into the wall simultaneously. As the turn judge shifted his eyes across all three lanes, the turn judge observed the swimmer in lane 3 pulling away from the wall with only the left hand in contact with the wall. Because the turn judge did not observe the right hand of the swimmer in contact with the wall, he raised his hand to make a call. Is this a valid DQ?

Recommended Resolution: The chief judge should recommend to the referee that the call not be accepted. Stroke & turn judges should only call what they see, not what they don't see. While it is possible that the swimmer did not make a two-hand touch, it is also possible that a two-hand touch was made, but made before the turn judge had shifted his eyes to that lane.

Applicable Rules: 101.2.4

2. A swimmer in lane 3 of the 100-yard butterfly moves too close to the right lane line. During the recovery portion of an arm stroke the swimmer's right arm hits the lane line causing the right arm to trail the left arm over and into the water (alternating action). However, the swimmer then pulls both arms back simultaneously during the propulsive portion of the arm stroke. The stroke judge signals a disqualification. Is this a valid DQ?

Recommended Resolution: This was a correct call. In the butterfly both arms must be brought forward over the water and pulled back simultaneously. In this case, the swimmer's arms were not brought forward over the water simultaneously. The fact that the lane line prevented the swimmer from recovering both arms simultaneously is not germane to the judging of the stroke.

Applicable Rules: 101.2.2, 103.13.1

3. A senior age group swimmer comes off the 50-meter turn in the butterfly on his back with his arms fully extended and does two dolphin kicks (streamlined) before rolling onto his breast and taking his first arm pull. Is he disqualified?

Recommended Resolution: Yes, the DQ is justified. While a swimmer may do one or more leg kicks after the start and each turn in the butterfly, the swimmer's shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall.

Applicable Rules: 101.2.2, 101.2.4

4. In the butterfly event, a swimmer misjudges the wall. He finishes the race with his head only, stopping the electronic timing system. Should he be disqualified?

Recommended Resolution: Yes. A two-hand touch is required for the finish of the butterfly event.

Applicable Rules: 101.2.5

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Butterfly

5. After the start of a butterfly event, a swimmer incorrectly believes that there has been a recall. He stands up but, realizing that no one else has stopped, he then resumes swimming. Is there a disqualification?

Recommended Resolution: Yes. Any swimmer who stands up in a stroke other than freestyle will be disqualified.

Applicable Rules: 102.10.5

6. Near the finish in a butterfly race, a swimmer starts his final stroke and finds himself too close-to the wall to make a full recovery, so he ducks his head under and reaches forward simultaneously with both hands underwater from the breast to touch. Is this legal?

Recommended Resolution: No, this is illegal according to USA Swimming Rules and Regulations. "Both arms must be brought forward over the water...."

Applicable Rules: 101.2.2

7. A swimmer in the 100 yard butterfly takes a simultaneous two-arm pull, kicks several times with her arms at her sides, brings both arms simultaneously forward over the water, keeps her arms stretched out in front of her for several kicks and then does another simultaneous two-arm pull. She repeats this process throughout the swim. Should she be disqualified?

Recommended Resolution: There should be no disqualification. There is no rule requiring an arm stroke between leg kicks. The swimmer may kick as many times as desired between strokes as long as both legs kick simultaneously.

Applicable Rules: 101.2.2, 101.2.3

8. The swimmer in lane 4 is a terrific butterfly swimmer, but he takes only one kick and then one arm stroke that brings him to the surface of the water. Is he allowed to take more strokes while under the surface of the water?

Recommended Resolution: No, he is allowed no more than one arm pull. He is allowed to kick as far as he wants just as long as he remembers to make sure his head breaks the surface before the 15-meter mark.

Applicable Rules: 101.2.2

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Butterfly

9. At the officials' briefing, one of the presenters said that during the beginning of the first arm pull, the position of the body can be in any position, just as long as the head breaks the water surface before the 15-meter mark. What is wrong with this statement?

Recommended Resolution: The presenter should have said that from the beginning of the first arm pull, the body shall be kept on the breast.

Applicable Rules: 101.2.2

10. The swimmer in lane 1 is young and has a hard time bringing her arms completely out of the water during the recovery portion of the butterfly. Every time she recovers her arms, only half of her arm clears the water surface. The official on the turn end of the pool disqualifies her for not recovering her arms completely out of the water. The coach goes to the Referee and protests the call. Was the call proper?

Recommended Resolution: No. Where the rule states, "Both arms must be brought forward over the water and pulled back simultaneously", any part of the arm recovering over the water is sufficient for satisfying this rule.

Applicable Rules: 101.2.2

11. A swimmer likes to keep his feet separated while kicking to the surface of the water at the beginning of the butterfly. He was disqualified for not having his feet and legs together while he was doing the butterfly kick. Is this a valid disqualification?

Recommended Resolution: No. The legs or the feet do not need to be on the same level.

Applicable Rules: 101.2.3

12. The swimmer in lane 7 completes her butterfly event with a two-hand touch. One hand is under the water and one hand is out of the water, above the water surface, on this simultaneous finish. The stroke and turn official disqualified her for not having both of her hands either out of the water or under the water. Should Martha have been disqualified?

Recommended Resolution: No, she should not have been disqualified. The touch may be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.

Applicable Rules: 101.2.5

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Butterfly

13. At our local championship meet, a coach noticed that many swimmers were dropping their shoulders after the final arm pull and prior to the touch. The coach believes and has taught his swimmers that they must keep their shoulders level with the water until the touch was made. Is the coach correct in his belief?

Recommended Resolution: No, the coach is incorrect. The rules do not address the position of the shoulders during the swim or approaching a turn. The rules only require that the body be on the breast, therefore the shoulder position at the turn or finish doesn't have to be level with the water. The only time the rules mention shoulders is when the swimmer leaves the wall after a turn.

Applicable Rules: 101.2.4, 101.2.5

14. In the 200-meter butterfly a swimmer approaching the finish takes a stroke, recovers and then dives for the wall doing a butterfly kick all the way in. As part of the dive, he submerges completely prior to touching the wall. Is this an infraction?

Recommended Resolution: As long as the turn judge can clearly see the entire body of the swimmer is fully submerged, then the swimmer should be disqualified. The rules state that the swimmer's head must break the surface of the water by the 15-meter mark and must remain on the surface until the next turn or finish.

Applicable Rules: 101.2.2

15. A swimmer in the 100-meter butterfly enters the water at the start and swims on her side without going past vertical toward the back. She performs a kick with both legs moving simultaneously without alternating but moving from side to side. The turn judge at the start end calls a disqualification stating that the swimmer did not perform a kick with an up and down motion. Should the DQ be accepted?

Recommended Resolution: The DQ should not be accepted. The view of the kick as up and down is relative to the swimmer's body.

Applicable Rules: 101.2.2, 101.2.3

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Backstroke

1. There are yellow buoys on each lane line to mark the 15-meter distance but some buoys shift and slide haphazardly up and down the lane lines. The swimmer's head in Lane #6 breaks the water surface at the edge of the buoy in her lane but the marker in Lane #7 is passed. Is this a DQ?

Recommended Resolution: No -- placement of distinctive colored floats or markers on every lane line must be uniformly set at the 15-meter distance. However, floats "float" and the swimmer should be given the benefit of the doubt by judging the 15 meter mark by the "most generous" of all the appropriate floats in the pool.

Applicable Rules: 103.13.1, 102.13.2

2. A swimmer in backstroke who has gone past vertical with the shoulder makes the backstroke turn but fails to touch the wall and sculls back to touch. The turn judge reports this as a disqualification. Is this a valid DQ?

Recommended Resolution: Yes.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.3.

3. In a backstroke event, a swimmer stands up in the middle of the course. He does not walk or spring off from the pool bottom, but rests and then resumes swimming. Is there a disqualification?

Recommended Resolution: Yes. Once the swimmer stands, he is no longer on his back. The rulebook states "The swimmer shall push off on his back and continue swimming on the back throughout the race." Moreover, a swimmer is not permitted to stand on the bottom during any stroke other than freestyle.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.2, 102.10.5

4. In a backstroke start, a swimmer keeps his toes under the water until the gun sounds and then slides them up and takes off from the gutter. Should any action be taken?

Recommended Resolution: USA Swimming Rules and Regulations states, "Standing in or on the gutter or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter before or after the start is prohibited." Since the infraction took place after the start, the stroke and turn judge should make the disqualification call.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.1

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Backstroke

5. Mary was swimming the 100-yard backstroke. At the first turn, the turn judge indicated a disqualification stating that the swimmer missed the wall on the turn. Mary and her coach both say that she did touch the wall and that her feet just slipped. They also state that Mary could not have pushed off the wall if she didn't touch it.

Recommended Resolution: Stroke and turn judges are taught to call what they see and not what they don't see. This philosophy is most evident in the missed touch at the turn where it is a requirement of the turn judge to say, "the swimmer did not touch the wall" rather than "I didn't see the swimmer touch the wall." The judge also cannot infer an infraction from other evidence such as a slow departure from the wall that normally accompanies a missed touch. The coach and/or swimmer should go to the referee and question him/her about the call. It is the duty of the referee to make sure that the call was, in fact, correct by checking with the judge and reviewing exactly what the judge saw. The referee should find out exactly how the judge knew the swimmer missed the wall.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.3, 102.13.1

6. During the 50-yard backstroke a swimmer in lane 4 approaches the turn. When the swimmer moves past vertical towards the breast to make a flip turn, he finds himself in contact with the wall. Without doing a flip turn the swimmer leaves the wall past vertical towards the back. What action should the turn judge take?

Recommended Resolution: No action is required. During the turn the shoulders may be turned past vertical toward the breast after which a continuous single arm pull or a continuous double arm pull may (not required) be used to execute the turn. As the turning action was continuous, there should be no disqualification.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.3

7. After the start of the backstroke the swimmer in lane 2 breaks the surface of the water. He then re-submerges and re-surfaces prior to reaching the 15-meter mark. The swimmer remains on the surface for the duration of the race except as permitted in the turns. What, if any, is the proper call?

Recommended Resolution: The swimmer is permitted but not required to be completely submerged prior to reaching the 15-meter mark. There is no call.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.2

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Backstroke

8. A young swimmer approaches the turn of the 50-yard backstroke. The swimmer rolls from the back to the breast, takes a single arm pull and initiates his turn. After completing one full somersault-style turn, the swimmer returns to a position facing the wall without ever touching the wall. The swimmer looks up at the official and does another somersault turn, touching the wall this time, leaves on the back and finishes the race. The turn judge makes no call. Was this correct?

Recommended Resolution: The swimmer should be disqualified for failure to perform a continuous turn. The second “turn” is not part of the initial rollover turn and is viewed in the same way as sculling back to the wall.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.3

9. After passing under the flags and preparing for a turn during a 100-yard backstroke event, a swimmer turns past the vertical towards the breast and extends his arm while kicking. He does not take an arm pull but continues to kick into the wall then executes a flip turn, leaving the wall on his back. Should he be disqualified?

Recommended Resolution: The swimmer should be disqualified for a non-continuous turning action. As there is no initiation of the turning action after the shoulders pass vertical, the turning action is not continuous. The fact that the swimmer was kicking has no bearing on the disqualification.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.3

10. In an 8 & under 25-yard backstroke event, the stroke judge recommends a disqualification based on the fact that the swimmer swam elementary backstroke and not a “crawl” backstroke. Should the swimmer be disqualified?

Recommended Resolution: The swimmer should not be disqualified. The backstroke rules do not specify any particular stroke or kick requirements, only that the race be swum on the back. There is no requirement that the stroke must be “crawl” or that the kick be a flutter kick.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.2

11. A swimmer has a legal backstroke start with the toes and feet below the water surface. After the start the swimmer decided to try to get an advantage by raising his feet and pushing off with his toes curled over the lip of the gutter. Is this legal?

Recommended Resolution: Prior to the start it is the starter’s responsibility to make sure the swimmer has the correct starting position. After the start if a swimmer curls his toes curled over the lip of the gutter it is the stroke or turn judge’s jurisdiction. The judge for that lane should disqualify the swimmer.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.1

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Backstroke

12. A swimmer was disqualified in a backstroke event when she stopped using the butterfly kick after the start and after each turn of this event. Was this DQ correct?

Recommended Resolution: The swimmer should not be disqualified. A backstroke swimmer can use any kind of kick while they are on their back.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.2

13. A swimmer was disqualified when, after turning past vertical toward the breast to make a turn, he somersaulted and failed to touch the wall with any part of his body but continued to swim the backstroke properly. Is this a valid DQ?

Recommended Resolution: Correct. Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.3

14. During a backstroke turn a swimmer turned his shoulders past vertical toward the breast to make his continuous motion turn. While on the breast, he immediately took one single arm pull and then one continuous simultaneous double arm pull to execute the turn. He was disqualified for the double arm pull after the single arm pull. Is this DQ correct?

Recommended Resolution: Yes. 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. The swimmer can only use one continuous single arm pull or one continuous simultaneous double arm pull, but not both.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.3

15. A swimmer was disqualified when after swimming past the backstroke flags she turned her shoulders past vertical to start her turn and had to glide and was kicking while on her breast to get into position before she executed a single arm pull. All this motion, gliding and kicking was all continuous. Should the DQ stand?

Recommended Resolution: Yes. Once the body has left the position on the back, any kick or arm pull must be part of the continuous turning action.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.3

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Stroke & Turn

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Backstroke

16. A very young swimmer on his backstroke turn did not judge the wall and touched the wall with his elbow while on his back. He continued to swim even though the stroke and turn judge raised his hand to signify a disqualification. At the finish he touched with his head instead of his hand. The finish stroke and turn judge also raised her hand for a disqualification. Were these officials correct?

Recommended Resolution: No. Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall and at the finish of the race some part of the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back. Both disqualifications should be overruled.

Applicable Rule: 101.3.3 & 101.3.4

17. A swimmer finished the backstroke turn correctly and then as she left the wall and before she could get to her back, she fixed her goggles so they wouldn't be resting on her nose. She was disqualified because she was not at or past vertical toward the back when she left the wall. Was the disqualification correct?

Recommended Resolution: Yes, she should have been disqualified because she didn't return to a position on the back by the time she left the wall. Applicable Rules: 101.3.3

18. A backstroker starts her race and surfaces prior to the 15-meter mark. She then re-submerges and resurfaces, again prior to the 15-meter mark. Is this legal?

Recommended Resolution: Yes. The rule states that "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 yds) after the start and each turn. Note that the rule uses the word "permissible". Submersion is not a requirement.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.2

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Freestyle

1. A swimmer, toward the end of an 8&U 25-yard freestyle, grabs the lane line to rest and, in the process, pushes backwards toward the start end before resuming and completing the distance. What should be the outcome?

Recommended Resolution: There is no call to make. Forward motion while grasping the lane line is illegal; backward motion is not. Freestyle has no prescribed cycle or form so resting, floating and pushing back are not stroke violations.

Applicable Rules: 102.10.11, 101.4.2

2. A swimmer leaves the pool believing that he has finished his freestyle race. Finding out that he has not swum the correct number of lengths, he enters the pool again to finish. Is this legal or should he be disqualified?

Recommended Resolution: He should be disqualified. USA Swimming Rules and Regulations states, "...a swimmer must not leave the pool, or walk, or spring from the bottom."

Applicable Rules: 102.10.5

3. A swimmer believes he has finished a freestyle race and walks a few steps away from the wall. He is advised to swim two more lengths. He returns to the wall and completes the required distance. Should he be disqualified?

Recommended Resolution: The swimmer should be disqualified. USA Swimming Rules and Regulations states, "...a swimmer must not leave the pool, or walk, or spring from the bottom."

Applicable Rules: 102.10.5

4. During a 500-yard event, a swimmer misses the wall. The turn judge signals an infraction. At what should be the end of the race, the coach shouts, "swim another 50," and the athlete does so. Is there any limit to when a swimmer can go back and touch a missed wall? Does the disqualification stand? What if the event is 100 yards or 1,650 yards? Does the length of the race have any bearing on the disqualification?

Recommended Resolution: The disqualification should stand. USA Swimming Rules and Regulations require that the swimmer touch the wall upon completion of each length. When the swimmer makes the next touch at the opposite end of the pool, he has lost the opportunity to correct the missed touch. The length of the race has no bearing.

Applicable Rules: 101.4.3

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Freestyle

5. A swimmer likes to swim the butterfly. He would like to do the butterfly during the freestyle event. An official tells his coach that he can swim butterfly, but he can't alter the stroke at any time during the race. Was this a correct statement made by the official?

Recommended Resolution: No. In an event designated as freestyle the swimmer may swim any style. In a medley relay or an individual medley event, freestyle means any style other than butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke.

Applicable Rules: 101.4.2

6. A young swimmer can't make up his mind what stroke he wants to swim. During the first length of a 50-yard freestyle, he decided to do the backstroke and the butterfly during the first 25 yards and the breaststroke and freestyle during the last 25 yards. He did a forward start and then a corkscrew to get into position to do his backstroke. The official on the turn end of the pool raised his hand to disqualify him for not completing the backstroke until he touched the wall at the finish of the first 25 yards of this event. Was this a correct infraction?

Recommended Resolution: No. In an event designated as freestyle the swimmer may swim any style. In a medley relay or an individual medley event, freestyle means any style other than butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke.

Applicable Rules: 101.4.2

7. A swimmer got very tired on her 500-yard freestyle. She decided to stop and rest. By resting, her feet touched the bottom of the pool. After the short rest, she sprang from the bottom of the pool and completed the race. Should she have been disqualified?

Recommended Resolution: Yes. 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 shall result in disqualification.

Applicable Rules: 102.10.5

8. A young "freestyler" just completed the only turn in the 50-yard freestyle, but didn't touch the wall. She started to swim and got as far as the middle of the pool when she decided to return to the turn end of the pool and touch without doing a flip turn. In the meantime, the official raised his hand and wrote a disqualification slip. Was this a valid disqualification?

Recommended Resolution: No the disqualification should be pulled. Upon completion of each length the swimmer must touch the wall. She should not have been disqualified if she went back and touched the wall at the turn end prior to touching the wall at the finish end.

Applicable Rules: 101.4.3

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Stroke & Turn

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

Freestyle

9. During the turn of the 50-yard freestyle, a swimmer got so close to the wall that only his toe touched the wall. At the finish, he touched the wall with his head because he was looking under the water at the swimmer in the next lane and not looking for the wall in his lane. Was this a legal touch at the turn and finish?

Recommended Resolution: Yes, upon completion of each length the swimmer must touch the wall and the swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his person touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance.

Applicable Rules: 101.4.3 & 101.4.4

10. At a time trial, a swimmer in the 400-meter freestyle notifies the deck referee that he will be trying for a 100-meter split. After the first 100 meters, the swimmer sees that he has not made the desired time, swims about 25 meters out and then swims back to the start end and exits the pool. What infraction has occurred? When should the judge raise his hand?

Recommended Resolution: The swimmer has committed two infractions. The first is that he did not touch the wall at the completion of each length. Additionally, he left the pool prior to the completion of the race. The turn judge at the turn end should raise his hand when the swimmer starts to swim back to the start end from 25 meters out. The turn judge at the start end should raise his hand when the swimmer exits the pool.

Applicable Rules: 101.4.3, 102.10.5, 102.14.4A(1)(d)

11. In a 100-yard freestyle race, the turn judge observes the swimmer miss the wall at the first turn. When should the judge raise her hand?

Recommended Resolution: The judge should raise her hand when the swimmer starts swimming the next length after missing the wall. If the swimmer realizes his error, returns to the wall and touches it before reaching the other end of the pool, the judge can reverse her call.

Applicable Rules: 101.4.3, 102.10.1

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Stroke & Turn

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

Individual Medley

1. During a 200-yard IM, a swimmer in the backstroke leg at the turn end rolls onto the breast and his out-stretched hand immediately touches the wall. The swimmer thereupon grabs the gutter, places one foot on the wall and the other in the gutter, clearly above the water surface. He pushes off past vertical toward the back and completes the event. Did a violation occur?

Recommended Resolution: No violation occurred. On intermediate turns in the IM, the stroke rules apply and it appears that there would be no possibility of a non-continuous turn if the touch occurred immediately upon rolling past vertical onto the breast. Once a legal touch has been made in any stroke, the swimmer may turn in any manner desired. The only requirement is that the swimmer must be "in a position on the back" when the feet leave the wall and according to the description this requirement was met.

Applicable Rules: 101.5.3A, 101.3.3, 5 June 1999 Rules and Regulations Committee Interpretation

2. During the 200-yard individual medley, a swimmer in the backstroke leg approaches the intermediate turn and starts to make a valid continuous turn. The swimmer's hand touches the wall immediately after turning onto the breast. The swimmer, now on the breast, grabs the gutter, places one foot against the wall and the other foot onto the gutter with the toes clearly above the water surface and on the gutter. The swimmer then pushes off on the back and finishes the last leg of the backstroke portion of the race. Is there an infraction?

Recommended Resolution: First, the turn is legal as the motion was continuous once the swimmer's shoulders went past the vertical up to the touch. Second, the rulebook (rule 101.3.1) states that "Standing in or on the gutter or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter before or after the start is prohibited". Since the swimmer placed his/her feet in the gutter a number of lengths after the start, there is no disqualification. The swimmer may not place his feet in or on the gutter immediately after the start. It is silent about the turn. There is no infraction.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.1, 101.3.3

3. In the 400-meter individual medley, the swimmer touches the wall at the end of the breaststroke leg with two hands simultaneously then does a flip turn before pushing off to start the freestyle leg. Is this legal?

Recommended Resolution: Yes it is. As long as the swimmer made a legal touch, they can turn in any manner desired before stating the next leg.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.4, 101.5.3B(3)

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Stroke & Turn

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

Relays

1. In the 400-yard medley relay, the backstroker for the team in lane 3 got into the water and had a legal start and swim. There was a legal exchange between the backstroker and the second swimmer. The second swimmer started swimming butterfly and continued until she had a legal touch which finished the second leg of the relay. The third swimmer did breaststroke and the anchor swimmer did freestyle. Was this legal?

Recommended Resolution: No, the medley relay is swum in the following order: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle.

Applicable Rules: 101.6.2

2. During the freestyle portion of the medley relay, the swimmer in lane 2 decided to do some butterfly and some freestyle. The relay team was disqualified because he was swimming the butterfly during the freestyle leg of the medley relay. Was this a valid disqualification?

Recommended Resolution: Yes it was. In a medley relay, freestyle means any style other than butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke. Therefore, swimming the butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke during the freestyle leg of the medley relay is not permitted.

Applicable Rules: 101.4.2, 101.6.2

3. During the 400-yard freestyle relay, the team in lane 6 decided to swim in medley relay order. They were disqualified for not swimming all freestyle. Was this correct?

Recommended Resolution: No. In an event designated freestyle the swimmer or swimmers may swim any style.

Applicable Rules: 101.6.1, 101.4.2

4. During the 200-yard medley relay, the breaststroke swimmer doesn't get out of the pool before it is time for the freestyle swimmer to make the final exchange with the butterfly swimmer. The team is disqualified because the breaststroke swimmer didn't get out of the pool in time. Was this a valid disqualification?

Recommended Resolution: Yes, each relay team member must leave the water immediately upon finishing his/her leg, except the last member.

Applicable Rules: 101.6.3.E

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Stroke & Turn

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

Relays

5. In a 200-yard medley relay, the third swimmer (butterfly) misjudges the distance to the wall at the finish of his leg and hits the wall with his head. After the swimmer first hits the wall, the fourth swimmer leaves the block to swim the freestyle leg. The third swimmer then touches with both hands simultaneously. What is the call?

Recommended Resolution: The relay team should be disqualified for a finish violation by the third swimmer. At the finish of the butterfly, the swimmer must touch with two hands simultaneously. There would be no relay take-off violation because the third swimmer did conclude his leg by touching the wall with his head. The finish just wasn't legal.

Applicable Rules: 101.2.5, 101.6.2, 101.6.3C