

Swim Rules & Regulations

Breaststroke: Forward start. Swimmer permitted one full arm pull (beyond hipline) and one kick while submerged at start and after turns; head must surface by the widest part of the 2nd stroke (before hands turn inward). Arm pulls shall be in same horizontal plane (parallel to water surface). Hands shall be pushed forward from the breast on or under the water (elbows must remain in water except at turn or finish). Stroke cycle consists of one arm pull and one kick in that order; the head must break water surface at least once each cycle. Swimmer's leg motions must be simultaneous; feet must be turned out in downward propulsive part of kick. No flutter or butterfly kick is allowed, except during the start and each turn when one downward butterfly kick may follow initial arm pull if followed immediately by a breaststroke kick. On the turn & finish, a simultaneous two-hand touch is required. On turn, shoulders must be past vertical toward the breast when swimmer leaves wall.

Common Violations: Two strokes or kicks underwater; alternating kick; scissors kick; butterfly kick; arms not moving in the same horizontal plane; break in stroke cycle; over-water recovery; non-simultaneous or one-hand touch.

Butterfly: Forward start. Swimmer is allowed one arm pull and as many kicks as desired at start and turn, but head must surface by the 15-meter mark. The first arm pull must bring the swimmer to the surface. Arms must pull and recover simultaneously, with forward arm motions over the water surface. Up and down movement of legs and feet must be simultaneous. Breaststroke or flutter kicks are not allowed. At the turns & finish, both hands must touch simultaneously, but do not have to be on the same level. At the turn, shoulders must be past vertical toward the breast when swimmer leaves the wall.

Common Violations: Submerged past the 15M mark; alternating kick; scissors kick; non-simultaneous arm stroke; underwater recovery; non-simultaneous or one-hand touch.

Backstroke: Backstroke start. Head must surface by 15-meter mark. Shoulders must be past vertical toward back throughout race except at turn. Shoulders may turn past vertical as part of a continuous turning action at the turn only. Continuous single or simultaneous double arm pull may be used to execute turn, any kicking or gliding must be part of the turning action. Swimmer must be past vertical toward back when he/she leaves the wall. Swimmer must remain on back and may not be completely submerged except at touch at finish.

Common Violations: Submerged past the 15M mark; getting artificial assistance (pulling on lane ropes or pushing off the sides); shoulders past vertical toward breast (not on back); non-continuous turn; independent kicks or pulls during the turn; no touch on the turn.

Freestyle: Forward start. Head must surface by 15-meter mark. Some part of swimmer must touch wall at turn and finish. No pulling on lane lines, walking or pushing forward off bottom of pool.

Common Violations: Submerged past the 15M mark; no touch on the turn; walking on or pushing off the bottom of the pool; getting artificial assistance (pulling on lane ropes or pushing off the sides).

Individual Medley: Butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle, in that order. Individual stroke rules apply to respective legs. When changing from one stroke to another, the touch must conform to the finish rules for the stroke just completed.

Common Violations: Stroke and turn infractions; transition infractions; swimming strokes out of order; swimming butterfly, backstroke, or breaststroke during the freestyle leg.

Relays: Freestyle (any stroke) and Medley (backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle, in that order). Individual stroke rules apply to respective legs. When changing from one stroke to another, the touch must conform to the finish rules for the stroke just completed. Swimmers cannot lose contact with the start block until the previous swimmer touches the wall. Swimmers must swim in the order listed on the entry card.

Common Violations: Stroke and turn infractions; transition infractions; swimming strokes out of order; swimming butterfly, backstroke, or breaststroke during the freestyle leg; early take-off; swimmers out of order.

Reasons to Becoming a Pacific Swimming Official:

- Help our kids learn proper techniques while they're young
- You're close to the action
- You'll be working with the greatest group of volunteers in all sports
- The bleachers aren't comfortable anyways
- It's a great way to meet future Olympians—unless you already have one in your home

Training provided. To get started, come down and volunteer as an apprentice at a local meet or talk to the coach or a parent on your local team who is already officiating.

For more information contact:

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