

STROKE & TURN RULES FOR SWIMMING

1. BACKSTROKE

- a. **Start.** 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. **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 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 and inadvertent re-submerging is permitted. By 15 meters, the head must have broken the surface of the water.
- c. **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 single arm pull or a double arm pull may be used to execute the turn. Kick and gliding is permitted before and after the turning action. The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall.
- d. **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.

2. FREESTYLE

- a. **Start.** The forward start shall be used.
- b. **Stroke.** In an 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.
- c. **Turns.** Upon completion of each length the swimmer must touch the wall.
- d. **Finish.** The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his person touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance.

3. BREAST STROKE

- a. **Start.** The forward start shall be used.
- b. **Stroke.** From the beginning of the first arm stroke 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 leg and one leg kick while wholly submerged. The head must break the surface of the water before the inward turn of the hand at the widest part of the arm stroke. No sculling is permitted.
- c. **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.
- d. **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 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 and the form prescribed in point 2 above must be attained from the beginning of the first arm stroke.
- e. **Finish.** At the finish, the body shall be on the breast and touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. The hands do not have to be in the same vertical plane. 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.

4. BUTTERFLY

- a. **Start.** The forward start shall be used.
- b. **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 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. Re-submerging is permitted. 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. Hands horizontally level in stroke.
- c. **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.
- d. **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.
- e. **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.

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.

- a. **Start.** The forward start shall be used.
- b. **Stroke.** The stroke for each one-fourth of the designated distance shall follow the prescribed rules for that stroke.
- c. **Turns.** Intermediate turns within each stroke shall conform to the turn rules for that stroke. 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:
- d. **Butterfly to backstroke.** The swimmer must touch like a butterfly finish. 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.
- e. **Backstroke to breaststroke.** The swimmers 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.
- f. **Breaststroke to freestyle.** The swimmer must touch like a breaststroke finish. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner.
- g. **Finish.** The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his/her person touches the wall after the prescribed distance.

6. FREESTYLE RELAY- The freestyle relay is swum by a team of four competitors, each swimming one quarter of the required distance.

- a. **Start.** The first swimmer of the relay must use a forward start.
- b. **Stroke.** Swimmers may swim in any style, adhering to the turn and finish rules of the freestyle event.

7. MEDLEY RELAY - The medley relay is swum by a team of four competitors, each swimming one quarter of the required distance of the race. The first shall use a backstroke start and swim backstroke; the second shall swim breaststroke; the third, butterfly; and the fourth shall swim any stroke other than backstroke, breaststroke or butterfly.

- a. **Turns, Stroke, Finish.** Each swimmer shall adhere to the position, stroke, kick, turn and finish rules governing the stroke being swum.

Remember...

When in doubt, the swimmer gets the benefit of the doubt. No Disqualification.

Take action on what you see, not what you expect to see.

SAMPLE CYO DISQUALIFICATION SLIP

CYO SWIMMING

Event _____ Heat _____ Lane _____

Girl Boy Cub Cadet

1. DISQUALIFICATIONS _____

TWO FALSE STARTS

- EARLY TAKE-OFF ON RELAY
- DID NOT TOUCH WALL AT THE TURN
- WALKING ON OR PUSHING OFF BOTTOM OF POOL
- PROPELLING BY PUSHING/PULLING ON LANE LINES
- OUT OF ORDER IN MEDLEYS
- SWIMMING WRONG STROKE

2. BACKSTROKE _____

TURNUED ONTO STOMACH DURING RACE OR FINISH

- MORE THAN ONE STROKE AFTER TURNING OVER AT TURN
- PUSHED OFF ON THE STOMACH OUT OF THE TURN

3. BREASTSTROKE _____

ILLEGAL PULL-OUT AT START OR AT TURN

- HEAD NOT BREAKING THE SURFACE EACH STROKE
- FLUTTER KICK OR DOLPHIN KICK OR SCISSORS KICK
- ANY STROKE OTHER THAN BREASTSTROKE ARM PULL
- DID NOT TOUCH WITH TWO HANDS AT THE SAME TIME TURN OR FINISH

4. BUTTERFLY _____

ARMSTROKE OTHER THAN BUTTERFLY ARM PULL

- FLUTTER KICK OR BREASTSTROKE KICK
- DID NOT TOUCH WITH TWO HANDS AT THE SAME TIME TURN OR FINISH

JUDGE'S INITIALS _____

SAME TIME TURN OR FINISH

JUDGE'S INITIALS _____