

SECTION 5: STROKES

(January, 2010)

A. FREESTYLE

1. In Freestyle events any style or stroke combination thereof may be used.
2. At each turn and at the finish, some part of the swimmer's body shall touch the end wall or cross the imaginary vertical plane. A freestyle swimmer who fails to touch at a turn may avoid disqualification by returning to the wall and touching with any part of the body provided that the length after the failed touch has not been completed.
3. A swimmer who has surfaced in the wrong lane after the start, or a turn, is permitted to pass below the lane rope to return to the assigned lane.
4. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except that it shall be permissible for the swimmer to completely submerge during the turn, and for a distance of not more than 15 meters after the start and after each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface.

B. BACKSTROKE

1. Prior to the starting signal, the swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands holding the starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter, is prohibited.
2. After the command, "Take Your Marks," the swimmer must assume a starting position and remain stationary until the starting signal is given.

3. At the start and after turning the swimmer shall push off and swim on the back throughout the race. The swimmer must be on the back at all times except when executing a turn. The normal position on the back can include a roll movement of the body up to, but not past 90 degrees from horizontal as determined by the line of the shoulders. The position of the head is not relevant.
4. When executing the turn, there must be a touch of the wall with some part of the swimmer's body. During the turn the shoulders may be turned over the vertical to the breast after which a continuous single arm pull or continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to initiate the turn. The swimmer must have returned to the position on the back upon leaving the wall.

INTERPRETATION

Executing a turn is a continuous motion meaning a uniform, unbroken motion with no pauses. After the upper shoulder rotates beyond the vertical the swimmer is either executing a turn or is swimming on the front.

5. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to completely submerge during the turn, and for a distance of not more than 15 meters after the start and each turn. By that point the head must have broken the surface.
6. Upon the finish of the race, the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back. A roll past 90 degrees is not allowed. The body may be submerged at the touch.
7. A competitor who has surfaced in the wrong lane after the start or turn is permitted to pass below the lane rope to return to the correct lane. The correct legal position on the back must be maintained.

C. BREASTSTROKE

1. From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn, 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.
2. All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement. All movements of the legs shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement
3. 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 for the final stroke at the finish. The 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.
4. 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. A single butterfly kick is permitted during the first arm stroke, followed by a breaststroke kick. Following which, all movements of the legs shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.
5. The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. A scissors, flutter or downward dolphin kick is not permitted except as in Section 5. C.4. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a dolphin kick.

6. 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 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.

D. BUTTERFLY

1. From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn the body shall be kept on the breast. Under water kicking on the side is allowed. It is not permitted to roll on the back at any time.
2. Both arms must be brought forward together over the water and brought backward simultaneously throughout the race.
3. All up and down movements of the legs must be simultaneous. The legs or the feet need not be on the same level but they shall not alternate in relation to each other. Either the 'dolphin' or the 'whip' or 'frog' kick may be used and swimmers may switch from one to the other at will.
4. At each turn and the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously, at, above, or below the water surface.
5. At the start and at the turns a swimmer is permitted one or more legs kicks and one arm pull under the 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 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.