

Recent Rule Changes



USA Swimming Stroke & Turns Videos

- × USA Swimming offers videos for officials that review rules for each stroke.
- × This is a great resource for coaches too!
- × The Videos can be found here:

<https://www.usaswimming.org/officials/officials-training-videos>

- × Officiating Backstroke (6:34)
- × Officiating Breaststroke (5:31)
- × Officiating Butterfly (5:46)
- × Officiating Freestyle (2:26)
- × Officiating Individual Medley (2:34)
- × Officiating Relays (2:01)



USA Swimming Rule 101.5.2 – Freestyle – Medley Relay and Individual Medley

- ✗ Freestyle leg of Medley Relay and Individual Medley can be in any style *except* butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke
- ✗ Interpretation issued Sep 2015: “Being in a position towards the back and moving through the water after a swimmer leaves the wall constitutes performing backstroke” and is therefore a disqualification.



Breaststroke - Timing of Permissible Butterfly Kick After the Start and Turns.

- × Issued Nov 2014: Rule 101.2.3 is amended – the underlined passage indicates the affected wording.
- × 101.2.3 Kick – After the start and each turn, at any time prior to the first breaststroke kick a single butterfly kick is permitted. Following which, all movements of the legs shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.
- × The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. Scissors, alternating movements or downward butterfly kicks are not permitted except as provided herein. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.



Breaststroke and Butterfly Separated Hands Interpretation

- × Breaststroke and butterfly require a two hand touch at the turn and finish
- × “Touch shall be made with both hands *separated* and simultaneously at, above or below the water surface”
- × Interpretation issued Jan 2013: Separated means that the hands cannot be stacked one on top of the other.
- × It is not necessary to see space between the hands. Incidental contact at the fingers is not a concern.



USA Swimming Rule 102.8.1E– The use of Tape.

- × Article 102.8.1E states in part, ...“Any kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by the Referee.”
- × *Common sense should prevail.* The following uses of tape are generally permitted in competition:
 - × **Wound protection** and closure (e.g. Band-Aids, dressings, “Butterfly” type, etc.) are normally permitted with no advanced notification to the Referee. When the tape to hold a dressing in place completely circles a major limb or the dressing is exceptionally large in size, advanced notification to the Referee is recommended.
 - × Taping of fingers or toes. “**Buddy Taping**” **no more than two (2) injured fingers or toes** together should be permitted. Advanced notification to the Referee is recommended.
 - × **Tape to secure medical alert bracelets** and pendants, religious objects, etc. should be permitted. Advanced notification to the Referee is recommended.
 - × **Tape to secure medical devices.** Example – insulin pumps, ostomy bags, etc. should be permitted. Advanced notification to the Referee is required.



USA Swimming Rule 102.8.1E– The use of Tape (cont.)

- × The following uses of tape are **not** permitted in competition – irrespective of whether a Doctor’s note has been presented.
 - × Elastic Therapeutic Tape is never permitted.
 - × Kinesio Taping is never permitted.
 - × Any other taping intended to provide compression or support to muscles, ligaments, tendons or joints (except as stated above) is never permitted.



Additional Rule Clarifications

- × For in water starts, including relay starts, one hand must be in contact with the wall.
- × For a relay in-water start, if the swimmer's hand loses contact with the wall before the previous swimmer makes contact with the wall, it would be an early take-off unless the swimmer retouches the wall with his/her hand after the previous swimmer has touched the wall.
- × In Butterfly, the arm from the wrist to the shoulder must break the surface of the water throughout the recovery.



Additional Rule Clarifications

- ✗ Butterfly arm movements are not required to be on the same horizontal plane.
- ✗ In a Backstroke turn, if the swimmer turns past vertical to the breast, and with continuous motion touches the wall prior to a flip, this is not a violation of the rules.
- ✗ Except in breaststroke, after the swimmer initially breaks the surface, s/he should not resubmerge; this may be difficult to call on the little ones who may go under the water in the course of their swim; full strokes should not be taken under the water



Additional Rule Clarifications

× Breaststroke Rule Reminders:

- × Body should be on the breast in order for arm pull to be in “same horizontal plane.”
 - × Only the first arm pull after start and turn can be past the hip line.
 - × Toes must be pointed out on kick
 - × Head must break surface of water by widest point of second arm pull, and on each cycle thereafter
- × *This is not a full list of all breaststroke rules, just clarifications of some of the more obscure rules*

