

## PART 1: SWIMMING RULES

All provisions under *Part 1: Swimming Rules*, unless otherwise specified, are effective beginning January 1, 2002, and until changed. Rules in effect on the first day of a meet shall govern throughout the meet.

*Part 1: Swimming Rules* is based upon articles 101, “Individual Strokes and Relays,” and 102, “Conduct and Officiating of All Swimming Competition,” of the USA Swimming Technical Rules, which, as amended, will govern all Masters swimming competitions.

All competitive swimming events held under corporate sanction shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules, which are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and promote uniformity in the sport so that no swimmer shall obtain unfair advantage over another.

It is not the purpose of the *Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition* of United States Masters Swimming (the national governing body) contained herein to set standards of care for the safety of the swimmer. Safety considerations should be addressed by the swimmer, the swim coach, and the local public entity or pool owner in whose facility events are held.

### ARTICLE 101: STARTS, STROKES, AND RELAYS

#### 101.1. STARTS

##### 101.1.1—Forward Start

The forward start may be taken from the starting block, the pool deck, or a push from the wall. At the commencement of each heat, the referee shall signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles to remove all clothing except for swimwear, followed by a long whistle indicating that they should take their positions with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform, the edge of the pool, or on the wall before the command “Take your mark.” Those starting in the water must have at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting block.

##### 101.1.2—Backstroke Start

**A Starting commands**—At the commencement of each heat, the referee shall signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles to remove all clothing except for swimwear. At the referee’s first long whistle, the swimmers shall immediately enter the water and at the second long whistle shall return without undue delay to the starting position.

**B All courses**—The swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end with both hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grips. Prior to the command “Take your mark,” and until the feet leave the wall at the starting signal, the swimmers’ feet including the toes shall be placed under the surface of the water. Standing in or on the gutter or curling the toes over the lip of the gutter is not

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permitted at any time before the start. A backstroke starting block may not be used.

### **101.2. BREASTSTROKE**

#### **101.2.1—Start**

The forward start shall be used.

#### **101.2.2—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 hip line, 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 legs and one leg kick while wholly submerged. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke.

#### **101.2.3—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.

#### **101.2.4—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 stroke 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 article 101.2.2 must be attained from the beginning of the first arm stroke.

#### **101.2.5—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 surface of the water. 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 stroke cycle preceding the touch.

### **101.3. BUTTERFLY**

#### **101.3.1—Start**

The forward start shall be used.

#### **101.3.2—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

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one arm pull under water, which must bring the swimmer to the surface. (**Note:** After the start and after each turn, only one breaststroke kick is allowed prior to the arm pull that brings 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. The swimmer must remain on the surface until the next turn or finish. 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.

### **101.3.3—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. The breaststroke or whip kick may be used exclusively or interchangeably with the dolphin kick while doing the butterfly stroke at any time during the race. However, when the breaststroke or whip kick is used, the arms must be recovered over the top of the water with each breaststroke or whip kick, except after the last such kick before the turn or finish. A scissors kicking movement is not permitted.

### **101.3.4—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.

### **101.3.5—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.

## **101.4. BACKSTROKE**

### **101.4.1—Start**

The backstroke start shall be used.

### **101.4.2—Stroke**

Standing in or on the gutter or curling the toes over the lip of the gutter immediately after the start is not permitted. The swimmer shall push off on the 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, at the finish, 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 of the water.

### **101.4.3—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 continuous single arm pull or a continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to execute the turn. Once the body has left the position on the back, any kick or arm pull must be part of the continuous turning action. The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall.

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**Note:** The swimmer who turns past vertical and, in a continuous motion, grabs the wall before pushing off with the feet while on the back is considered to have executed a “continuous turning action.”

##### **101.4.4—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

#### **101.5. FREESTYLE**

##### **101.5.1—Start**

The forward start or the backstroke start shall be used.

##### **101.5.2—Stroke**

In an event designated freestyle, the swimmer may swim any style, except that in a medley relay or 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.

##### **101.5.3—Turns**

Upon completion of each length, the swimmer must touch the wall.

##### **101.5.4—Finish**

The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of the swimmer touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance.

#### **101.6. 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.

##### **101.6.1—Start**

The forward start shall be used.

##### **101.6.2—Stroke**

The stroke for each one-fourth of the designated distance shall follow the prescribed rules for each stroke.

##### **101.6.3—Turns**

**A** Intermediate turns within each stroke shall conform to the turn rules for that stroke.

**B** 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:

**(1) Butterfly to backstroke**—The swimmer must touch as described in article 101.3.5. 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.

**(2) Backstroke to breaststroke**—The swimmer 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.

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**(3) Breaststroke to freestyle**—The swimmer must touch as described in article 101.2.5. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner.

### **101.6.4—Finish**

The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of the swimmer touches the wall after completion of the prescribed distance.

## **101.7. RELAYS**

### **101.7.1—Freestyle Relay**

Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke(s). Freestyle finish rules apply.

### **101.7.2—Medley Relay**

Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance continuously in the following order: first, backstroke; second, breaststroke; third, butterfly; and fourth, freestyle. Rules pertaining to each stroke used shall govern where applicable. At the end of each leg, the finish rule for each stroke applies in each case.

### **101.7.3—Rules Pertaining to Relay Races**

- A** No swimmer shall swim more than one leg in any relay event.
- B** When automatic relay take-off judging is used, all swimmers must touch the touchplate or pad in their respective lanes at the end of the course to have finished their legs of the relay race.
- C** A swimmer other than the first swimmer shall not start until the previous swimmer's leg has been concluded.
- D** If a team member other than the swimmer designated to swim a particular leg jumps into or enters the pool in the area where the race is being conducted and before all swimmers of all teams have finished the race, both the offending swimmer and relay team shall be disqualified.

**Note:** An exception may be granted to a relay team member who wishes to enter the water to start from the water; this swimmer shall notify the starter and be careful not to disturb or interfere with another swimmer or the timing system pad when in use.

- E** All relay team members shall leave the water immediately upon finishing their legs, except for the last member.

**Note:** Swimmers who cannot exit the water quickly enough to prevent interference with automatic officiating equipment may be allowed to hold on to the lane line until all relays have finished, allowing them to exit the pool more slowly or via the ladders at the conclusion of the race.

- F** Mixed relays shall consist of two men and two women who may swim in any order.
- G** Competitors shall be allowed to swim only once per meet in each of the following relays: men's/women's 200 medley, 400 medley, 200 freestyle, 400 freestyle, and 800 freestyle; and mixed 200 medley, 400 medley, 200 freestyle, 400 freestyle, and 800 freestyle.
- H** The team of a swimmer whose feet have lost contact with the starting platform (ground, deck, or wall) before the preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified.