



Backstroke Protocol

Recently, there has been confusion regarding the disqualification for submerged prior to the finish, or submerged during the swim. The following protocol has been drafted to provide clarification. This protocol has been reviewed and supported by the USA Swimming National Officials Committee Chair, and the USA Swimming National Rules Chair.

- The swimmer may be completely submerged at the finish touch. The finish touch is the actual touch of the wall, not the process of the final lunge.
- Turn/Finish Official: once the eyes have shifted to observe the touch, the official is no longer capable of making the call of submerged prior to the touch, or more correctly, submerged during the swim.
- If the swimmer submerges completely during the swim, and before the Turn/Finish Official shifts their eyes to the touch, the Turn/Finish Official can make the call of submerged during the swim.
- The Stroke Official may be in the best position to make the call of submerged prior to the finish touch.
- For the Stroke Official to make the call, s/he must:
 - Have an unobstructed view of the swimmer's entire body, and
 - See that the swimmer is completely submerged, and
 - Clearly see that the swimmer's hand has not touched the wall.
- If you do not have a Stroke Official, then the Chief Judge should thoroughly investigate the call from the Turn/Finish Official: what is your jurisdiction, where were you standing, what did you see, how far out was the swimmer when completely submerged, were you focused on the finish touch at the time of the call, etc.
- The Deck Referee makes the final decision to accept or reject the call (with the Meet Referee, if there is one, to intervene if there is a protest from the coach).
- We are observers of the meet and should not have a specific infraction in mind when judging a particular stroke. Please do not scrutinize this call.
- Effective June 2009, the disqualification slip has been changed. The following options have been removed from section 34: Past Vertical at Turn
 - Non-continuous turning action
 - independent kicks and
 - strokes

- The new terminology for 34: Past Vertical at Turn:
 - Delay initiating arm pull (turned onto breast with arm extended and delay initiating the arm pull)
 - Delay initiating turn (turned onto breast, completed arm pull, but delay in any further turning action)
 - Multiple strokes
- Another new addition to the DQ slip
 - 36: Completely submerged prior to turn or finish

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Wisconsin Officials Chair

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