



1 Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO
80909-5770
o 719.866.4578
f 719.866.4669
usaswimming.org

Bruce W. Stratton
398 S. 9th Street, Suite 290
Boise, ID 83702-6066
bruce@strattoncpa.com
208.376.1135 h
208.336.4953 o
208.342.8962 f

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To: General Chairs
Officials Chairs
Rules & Regulations Committee
Board of Directors, USA Swimming
USA Swimming Officials
USA Swimming Coach Members

From: Bruce W. Stratton, Chair

Subject: Interpretation of USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Article 101.2.3 (Breaststroke)

In 2005, FINA made changes to the technical rules for breaststroke which allowed a single downward butterfly kick during or at the end of the first arm pull after the start and after each turn. As required by USA Swimming Rules, we changed our technical rules for the breaststroke to conform to the changes made by FINA.

During the time since the change, there has been much confusion about what constitutes the beginning of the first arm pull. Based upon the Rules & Regulations Committee understanding of FINA's interpretation and actual practice in international competition, our guidance has been that the mere separation of the hands or arms does not necessarily constitute the beginning of the first arm pull.

However, we have been informed that FINA's interpretation is now different from our previous understanding of what constitutes the beginning of the first arm pull. In order for our interpretation to conform to that used by FINA, the following interpretation is being made, effective immediately.

For purposes of Article 101.2.3, as it relates to what constitutes the initiation of the first arm pull and the allowed single downward butterfly kick, the following applies:

After the start and after each turn, any lateral or downward movement of the hands or arms is considered to be the initiation of the first arm pull.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Member, U.S. Olympic Committee

Bruce W. Stratton, Chair
USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee