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September 21, 2005

To: General Chairs
Officials Chairs
Rules and Regulations Committee
Board of Directors, USA Swimming

From: Bruce W. Stratton, Chairman

Subject: Amendments to USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Articles 101.1 and 101.3

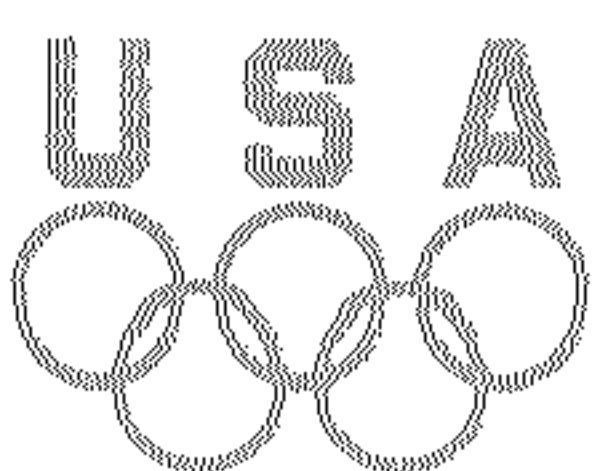
During the Rules and Regulations Committee meeting on September 15, 2005, the Committee addressed the need to amend our rules concerning the breaststroke and backstroke to conform them to recent rules changes made by FINA. The rules amendments and interpretations are attached and are effective September 21, 2005. Please disseminate them widely throughout the LSC's and other members of the swimming community.

Please note that during the House of Delegate meeting, I made an announcement regarding these changes and provided a brief interpretation of the breaststroke change. We have now concluded the interpretation given at the meeting was partially incorrect. Please pay special attention to the interpretation of the changes to the breaststroke kick included on the attached.

Also please note there is a FINA meeting scheduled in October which may result in a different interpretation than what is included on the attached. If that occurs, additional information will be provided as soon as it becomes available.

If you have any specific questions, or need further clarification, please contact me.

Bruce W. Stratton
Chairman, Rules and Regulations Committee



USA SWIMMING
RULES AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE
AMENDMENTS TO RULES TO CONFORM
TO FINA RULES

Effective September 21, 2005

**BACKGROUND REGARDING CHANGES TO THE BREASTSTROKE AND
BACKSTROKE TECHNICAL RULES**

FINA has recently changed the technical rules for the breaststroke and backstroke. With respect to the breaststroke, the changes permit a single downward butterfly kick after the start and after each turn. Changes to FINA Rules SW 7.1, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.7 are the basis for the change.

101.1 BREASTSTROKE – *Replace the existing 101.1 in its entirety with the following:*

.1 Start – The forward start shall be used.

.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. 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.

All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under, or over the water. The elbows shall be under 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.

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.

.3 Kick – After the start and after each turn, a single downward butterfly kick followed by a breaststroke kick is permitted while wholly submerged. 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. A scissors, flutter or downward butterfly kick is not permitted except as provided herein. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.

.4 Turns and Finish – 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.

BREASTSTROKE INTERPRETATION

The official interpretation for the changes to the breaststroke (101.1) is that during, or at the end of the arm pull-down of the first stroke after the start and after each turn, a single downward butterfly kick is allowed, but not required, followed by a breaststroke kick. During the pull-down, if a downward butterfly kick is taken, it must be followed by a breaststroke kick. It is not permissible to take only a downward butterfly kick without then taking a normal breaststroke kick. The downward butterfly kick is not permissible prior to the arm pull-down. In addition, there is now a requirement for all movements of the legs to be “in the same horizontal plane and without alternating movement”. This was previously not included in our rules.

For the backstroke, the change removes the requirement for the toes to be under the surface of the water at the start. Changes to FINA Rules SW 6.1, 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 are the basis for the change.

101.3 BACKSTROKE

.1 Start – The swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grip. ~~Prior to the starting signal, the swimmer's feet, including the toes, shall be placed under the surface of the water, where they shall remain until the starting signal.~~ Standing in or on the gutter, placing the toes above the lip of the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter, before or after the start is prohibited.

.2 Stroke - The swimmer shall push off on his 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~~ is permissible 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 after each turn. By that time point, the head must have broken the surface of the water.

.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.

.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.~~

BACKSTROKE INTERPRETATION

The official interpretation for the change to the backstroke (101.3.1) is that the toes are no longer required to be under the surface of the water at the start. However, the toes are still not allowed to be above the lip of the gutter or curled over the lip of the gutter. The change was actually made so that when full face pads are used (pads that extend above the gutter) there is no requirement to have the toes under the water. From a practical standpoint there is no change when using touch pads that actually hang on the pool gutter.

The changes to 101.3.2, 101.3.3 and 101.3.4 simply incorporate the language used by FINA and do not represent any changes to the stroke or to the manner in which it is currently being judged.

AUTHORITY

Article 510.1 states in part that “the Rules and Regulations Committee may alter, amend or repeal any portion of Part One at any time to conform to the rules of the Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA).”

The USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Committee approved the changes to Articles 101.1 and 101.3 of the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations, and the interpretation, both shown above, on September 15, 2005, and are effective September 21, 2005.



Bruce W. Stratton, Chairman
USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Committee