

PART ONE: TECHNICAL RULES

All competitive swimming events held under TSA 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 Rules and Regulations of the Tarheel Swimming Association contained herein to set standards of care for the safety of the swimmer. Safety considerations should be addressed by the swimmer, the swim coach, the swimmer's parents, the swim club and the local pool owner where events are held.

Article 101: Individual Strokes and Relays

101.1 Breaststroke

- .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. 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.
- .3 **KICK** — After the start and each turn, a single downward butterfly kick followed by a breaststroke kick is permitted after beginning the arm pull. Following which, all movements of the legs shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement. The feet must be turned outward 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** — 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 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 #2 above must be attained from the beginning of the first arm stroke.
- .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. 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.

101.2 Butterfly

- .1 **START** — The forward start shall be used.
- .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 one arm pull under water, which must bring him 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 brought back simultaneously.
- .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. A scissors or breaststroke kicking movement is not permitted.
- .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.
- .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.

101.3 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 grips. 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. A backstroke starting block may not be used.
- .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 swimmers 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 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.
- .3 **TURNS** — Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. After any part of the swimmer's head has passed the second set of backstroke flags (20-yard mark), the shoulders may turn past the vertical toward the breast, after which an immediate single arm pull or an immediate, simultaneous double arm pull may be used to initiate the turn. After the initiation of the turning action, no additional arm pull, other than those mentioned above, may be taken; however, kicking and gliding actions are permitted. The shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the back when the swimmer leaves 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.

101.4 Freestyle

- .1 START — The forward start shall be used.
- .2 STROKE — In an event designated freestyle, the swimmer may swim any style, except that in a medley relay or an 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.
- .3 TURNS — Upon completion of each length the swimmer must touch the wall.
- .4 FINISH — The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his person touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance.

101.5 Six-and-Under Exceptions

In consideration of the 6-and-under age group, the following stroke variations will be acceptable:

- .1 Backstroke:
 - .A Moving from the back position to a breast position during the course of a backstroke race, provided no attempt to swim in this position is made. However, arm or leg movement resulting in forward progress while on the breast will result in disqualification.
 - .B Moving the body to a breast position in reaching for the final touch in backstroke, provided neither an arm pull nor leg kick is taken. However, taking a pull or kick in that position will result in disqualification.
 - .C Some part of each foot must be in contact with the water at the start, but the feet do not need to be completely under water.
- .2 Breaststroke:
 - .A The body may go off the breast provided the swimmer makes a continuous effort to correct the position.
 - .B The swimmer's arms and legs must be moving in an effort to do the stroke and kick correctly. A flutter or scissors kick will result in disqualification.
 - .C A two-hand touch will not be required.

101.6 Relays

- .1 Freestyle Relay — Four swimmers on each team, each swims one-fourth of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke(s). Freestyle finish rules apply.
- .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 were applicable. At the end of each leg, the finish rule for each stroke applies in each case.

102.9 Disqualifications

- .1 In freestyle, a swimmer who missed the touch on the turn may return to the wall to complete the turn without disqualification. In backstroke, a swimmer who missed the touch on the turn may return to the wall to complete the turn without disqualification only if the swimmer's shoulders did not go beyond vertical towards the breast. To miss the wall on breaststroke or butterfly turns shall result in disqualification.
- .2 A swimmer may at any time, stop and stand without disqualification, provided that in resuming the stroke, the pool bottom is not used to gain forward momentum. Using the bottom to gain forward momentum shall result in disqualification.
- .3 A swimmer leaving his/her assigned lane unintentionally shall not be disqualified provided a reasonable effort is made to return to his/her lane, proper stroke mechanics are maintained, interference does not result, and the finish is made within the assigned lane.
- .4 Interference is defined as when one swimmer noticeably interrupts the pace or stroke of another, and shall result in disqualification.
- .5 Improper stroke, kick or touch on turns and finishes shall result in disqualification.

102.10 Protests

- .1 In the event of a dispute concerning the rules or meet management, the TSA representatives, or their alternates, are charged with jointly resolving the disagreement through the proper interpretation of the rules or by otherwise settling the dispute in accordance with the purpose of TSA as stated in Article II of the Bylaws.
- .2 Disputes over interpretation of rules or meet management will be addressed by both TSA representatives during the course of the meet as soon as possible after the alleged violation or other problem occurs. Any person, including a swimmer, coach, parent, or spectator, with a concern must address the concern with their TSA representatives.
- .3 Failure to resolve meet management problems or to agree on the interpretation of rules before the last regular event of the meet is swum shall constitute an impasse. When an impasse has been reached, the score sheets shall not be signed by the TSA representatives and the final score of the meet shall not be announced.
- .4 Announcement of the final score, after the signing of the score sheets by both TSA representatives, shall constitute the end of the meet. An impasse cannot arise after announcement of the final score, as the meet is officially ended.
- .5 An impasse may be resolved through an appeal to the Grievance Committee, which shall serve as an arbitration board. A written request for a hearing must be received by the Grievance Committee chairperson within 72 hours of the completion of the last event in the disputed meet. Failure to meet this deadline will result in an automatic end to the impasse, with the meet winner determined by the points as recorded on the night of the meet.

102.11 Officials

- .1 The home club recorder will obtain the names of competitors, place of finish, and first place time for the scorers to list and tabulate. The home club will provide runners to serve as needed. The recorder will obtain names of swimmers and their lanes for main events only. A form supplied by TSA will be used for the listing of events, contestants, times, etc. The awards table personnel and the announcer must be advised of results.

102.12 TSA Representative

- .1 During meets, TSA representatives may not serve in any other official capacity. They must always be available to address problems arising during meets.
- .2 The home club TSA representative shall be responsible for decisions regarding the combining of events.
- .3 The home club TSA representative shall be responsible for posting meet results on the TSA website within 24 hours after the conclusion of the meet.
- .4 The home TSA representative will identify a coaching area for both teams' coaches prior to the start of the meet. The coaching area excludes the area behind the starting blocks and the clerk of course area. Both coaching areas are to be as equitable as possible.
- .5 The home club TSA representative will hold a meeting of all meet officials 15 minutes before the start of the meet to review rules, idiosyncrasies of the pool and any anticipated problems. Officials should be informed of their particular areas of responsibility and be reminded to limit their activities to their assigned areas. Open discussion and agreement, between the stroke and turn judges and TSA Representatives, on the stroke and turn standards that will be applied to six-and-under swimmers must be a part of this meeting.

102.13 Starter

- .1 The starter shall be furnished by the home club.
- .2 The starter shall be in complete control of swimmers delivered to the starting blocks by the clerk of course. The judgment of the starter shall not be questioned by parents, coaches, or swimmers.
- .3 The starter should give proper commands:
 - .A For all events except backstroke and medley relay, the starter gives the command "Step up". Swimmers who desire to start from the edge of the pool may do so and shall stand next to the block. Otherwise, upon the starter's command, the swimmers shall step onto the starting block. For backstroke and medley relay events, the starter gives the command "Step in" and "Place your feet". The starter shall then give the preparatory command "Timers and judges ready."
 - .B Announce the distance and stroke or relay event.
 - .C On the starter's command "Take your mark", the swimmers shall immediately assume their starting position, in the forward start, with at least one foot at the front of the block. When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal.
 - .D When the swimmers are motionless, a starting device shall be used to start the event. If the primary starting device malfunctions twice during a heat, the starter will discontinue its use and start the event using a whistle. Use of the primary starting device may be resumed when the cause of the malfunction has been corrected.

- .E The term “starting device” as referred to in subparagraph “D” shall encompass the following means with which to start the event: a starter’s pistol, a whistle, a horn or other electronic starting device. Any electronic starting device must be loud enough to be heard by all swimmers.
 - .F If the starter determines that the swimmers have taken too long to become motionless, the swimmers should be released from their marks with the command “Stand”.
- .4 A false start shall be charged to swimmers leaving their marks before the starting signal is given, except that it remains in the starter’s discretion whether to charge a swimmer who has false started because of the action of another swimmer or the starter.
 - .5 If a swimmer should false start the race will be restarted.
 - .6 In the event of a false start, the starter shall decide when to re-swim the event.
 - .7 Any swimmer with two false starts in an event will be disqualified from that event. No replacements will be permitted for disqualified swimmers.
 - .8 A swimmer who reports to the blocks after the command “Take Your Mark” will be charged with a false start.
 - .9 A swimmer who reports to the blocks after the starting signal will be disqualified and charged with the swim. The heat will not be recalled.
 - .10 At the discretion of the Starter, and if agreed to by both TSA representatives, swimmers who swim two lengths of the pool shall remain in the water at the end of their race, close to the wall, while the next heat is started.

102.14 Judges

- .1 A swimmer participating in a meet may not serve as a Stroke and Turn Judge or Place Judge for that meet.
- .2 The home club will furnish 1st, 3rd, and, where necessary, 5th place judges.
- .3 The visiting club will furnish 2nd, 4th, and, where necessary, 6th place judges.
- .4 Two stroke judges will be provided, one from each club. They will mutually agree upon the specific pool area for which they will be responsible. Stroke judges will be positioned on opposite sides and/or ends of the pool and will be responsible for (1) stroke mechanics, (2) proper turns and touches, (3) finishing touches, and (4) relay takeoffs (unless otherwise decided by the TSA representatives prior to the start of the meet). Distinctly-colored disqualification slips will be provided by the TSA Meet Management Committee on which the stroke judge will indicate the event, heat, lane and nature of the infraction. All disqualifications are to be made at the moment of the infraction and are to be immediately indicated by a full raising of the arm and hand. Stroke judges are also responsible for insuring that the recorder receives notice of disqualification and passes it on to the scorers.

- .5 Prior to the start of the meet, the TSA representatives will decide who will call relay takeoff starts. The number of relays in each age group and the layout of the pool should help them to determine who will have this responsibility. If they cannot reach a decision, the stroke and turn judges will be responsible for relay takeoffs. All relay takeoff disqualifications are to be made at the moment of the infraction and are to be immediately indicated by a full raising of the arm and hand. The person responsible for relay takeoff judging is also responsible for insuring that the recorder receives notice of a relay takeoff disqualification and passes it on to the scorers.
- .6 In most cases, place judges should position themselves at the side of the pool at the finish line. However, in certain instances it may be appropriate to move to the end of the pool when adjacent lanes are finishing at a tie pace.
- .7 Upon the completion of all main events, with the exception of six-and-under events, the place judges shall position themselves in the appropriate lanes based on the order of finish until the recorder has determined and recorded the order of finish.
- .8 If any of the place judges are used as relay takeoff judges, other place judges will be assigned to replace them for that event.
- .9 In case sequential place judges disagree as to the order of finish as indicated by the presence of more than one judge positioned in the same lane, swimmers will be judged to have tied.
- .10 In case of disagreement between non-sequential judges on the order of finish, the placement of the swimmers in question shall be determined by a poll of all the place judges conducted by the recorder.
- .11 The recorder shall delay the running of subsequent main events until all place finishes for the current main event have been determined and recorded.
- .12 Each club must have at least one TSA-trained Stroke and turn judge. This judge must attend at least one TSA training session each year. If a trained stroke and turn judge is not available at a dual meet, the opposing team's TSA representative must be notified and a qualified as possible volunteer solicited.
- .13 The starter, stroke and turn judges and place judges shall be aware of their jurisdiction within the pool and shall make calls and decisions only within their jurisdiction. Calls and decisions made outside their jurisdiction will not be allowed. These primary judges may hold only one judging responsibility per event.

102.15 Judging Criteria

- .1 Judging will be based on applicable stroke rules applied in a consistent and uniform manner to all age groups, with the exception of defined deviations for 6-and-under swimmers. Each judge will, however, apply common sense in recognizing normal, involuntary deviations from perfection, and will declare as causes for disqualification only clear-cut infractions of which the judge is absolutely sure and will immediately indicate by a full raising of the arm and hand. If any question exists in the judge's mind regarding an infraction, the swimmer will be given the benefit of the doubt.
- .2 Prior to the start of the meet, the two clubs may agree to make rule interpretations more lax; however, the club which wants the stronger rule interpretation shall prevail.

- .3 The prime wall of the pool shall be deemed the finish and touch plane. Abnormal abutments such as ladders, curved portions of a wall, etc. shall not be considered part of the touch/finish plane and cannot be used for those purposes.
- .4 On all six-and-under main events, no part of the catcher's body may break the plane of the 15-yard rope. Failure to comply may result in disqualification of the swimmer if, in the judgment of the stroke and turn judge, some advantage was gained.

102.16 Timing

- .1 The first place judge shall be responsible for obtaining the first place time of main events for the purpose of determining pool and team records. Order of finish shall not be determined by time. Failure to obtain a first place time shall not be cause for repeating the heat. During combined events, the second place judge, when acting as the first place judge for an event, shall be responsible for obtaining the first place time for that event.

102.17 Clerk of Course

(future)

102.18 Scorers

- .1 Club scores will be kept by two scorers, one from each club.
- .2 The scorers will insure that the disqualification slip is made available to the affected coach and swimmer for reference.

102.19 Announcer

(future)

102.20 Smoking

- .1 To protect the health and safety of swimmers, participants, and attendees, smoking will not be allowed within the pool enclosure.

102.21 Alcoholic Beverages

- .1 Drinking of alcoholic beverages will not be allowed during the meet within the pool enclosure.