

Backstroke Turn

As there are sometimes different understandings regarding the Backstroke Turn at swimming competitions, I am submitting to all Canadian officials and coaches the official Fina Technical Swimming Committee interpretation on rule SW 6.4.

"Once the body has left the position on the back, there will be no kick or arm pull that is independent of the continuous turning action."

Some interpret this to mean that there is no kicking allowed once on the breast. This interpretation is not correct.

Kicking is acceptable if it is part of the continuous turning action. The swimmer must be observed in total. Turning from Back to Breast too far from the wall, and kicking to make up the distance to begin the turn, is illegal. Kicking as part of the turn is legal.

Butterfly Turn

A clarification of the Butterfly turn involves understanding of SW 8.1 and SW 8.4.

SW 8.1 states:

"It is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time". This applies to the statement "From the beginning of the first armstroke after the start and after each turn, the body shall be kept on the breast and both shoulders shall be in line with the normal water surface".

Rule SW 8.1 applies to that portion of the race when the swimmer is "stroking" butterfly from the first armstroke onwards.

The official interpretation is that once a legal touch is made (according to SW 8.4) a swimmer may turn in any manner, but the body must be beyond the vertical toward the breast when leaving the wall (up to but not including 90 degrees). The proper form

"on the breast" must be achieved from the first armstroke onwards. This is when the shoulders must be in the "horizontal" position relative to the normal water surface.

Rule SW 8.4, however, applies to turns and the finish only. The only requirement is that the touch be made "with both hands simultaneously". All reference to the shoulders in SW 8.4 was deleted from the rulebook in 1998.

Breaststroke Rule Interpretations

The Breaststroke is the most technical swimming stroke. To clarify some points, consider the following interpretations based on SW 7 in the Fina rulebook.

Technical rules on breaststroke apply specifically to the arms and legs. There is no longer any mention of the shoulders, since there is no longer a requirement for the shoulders to be in line with the normal water surface. (This requirement was deleted from SW 7.2 in the 1998 Fina rulebook).

The elbows must be under the water on the forward part of the stroke in breaststroke (SW 7.3) It is only at the final stroke at the finish of the race that the elbows may be over the water.

The swimmer may not push off the wall on the back. SW 7.1 states "it is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time." (This also applies to the butterfly as stated in SW 8.1)

SW 7.2 and SW 7.4 are identical. One applies to the arms; one to the legs. Arms and legs must be horizontal and simultaneous when stroking breaststroke. At the turns and the finish, the touch must be simultaneous only, but need not be horizontal.

Dolphin Kick: An illegal dolphin kick in breaststroke is a deliberate downward kicking motion or thrust. It

would usually generate propulsion. However, since the feet are permitted to break the surface of the water, they will necessarily break the surface again on their re-entry path. This does not necessarily mean that a dolphin kick was used; it may simply be a natural legal undulation of the legs as a result of a forceful push off the wall. An illegal dolphin kick is a downward thrust and deliberate kicking motion of the legs and feet.

Scratch Rule (SNC 3.4.3 b)

As it applies to timed final events that are swum in the morning heats at national designated meets

The last scratch deadline without penalty for Time Final events swum in the morning heats (ex: 800/1500m freestyle & 4x200m free relays) shall be 15 minutes prior to the start of preliminaries on the day of the event. Reseeding will take place at this time.

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NOC Chair and Rules Chair

