

A large, light gray watermark of the USA Swimming logo is centered in the background. It features a shield with a white field containing the letters 'USA' in red, and a blue field containing the word 'SWIMMING' in white. A white star is positioned below the shield, and a registered trademark symbol (®) is located to the right of the shield.

USA Swimming
and Wisconsin Swimming

Stroke and Turn Judge Clinic

Clinic Instructor:

Presentation Prepared by USA Swimming National
Officials Committee

and

Wisconsin Swimming Officials Committee

Clinic Overview

- Introduction
- Philosophy of Officiating
- Expectations and Professional Conduct
- Technical Rules
- Working a Meet
- Pursuing Certification
- Questions

Philosophy of Officiating

- Everything is grounded in the rules. The rules determine what is allowed and what is not.
 - “Ugly but legal”
 - Officials are NOT coaches
- Observers, not inspectors
- Observation should be consistent for all rules and all swimmers
- Do NOT infer or extrapolate
- Swimmer ALWAYS gets the benefit of the doubt

Teamwork

- Meet Referee is in charge, assisted by Deck Referees and Chief Judges
- Cooperate and respect all at all times
- Accept assignment without complaint
- Answer questions from Referees and Chief Judges honestly and with as much detail as possible
- Follow established relief protocols

Uniform and Self-Presentation

- WI Swimming LSC Uniform Requirements
 - Navy pants or knee-length shorts or skirt
 - White polo shirt, tucked in
 - Belt
 - Primarily white tennis shoes
 - White socks
 - Credential and/or nametag
- Look professional at all times!

Conduct Expectations

- Maintain positive attitude at all times
- No cell phone usage on deck
- Do not cheer for or coach swimmers
- Control emotions on deck
- Do not discuss calls with anyone other than Referees or Chief Judges unless asked
- Smile!

Definitions

- **Arm**—That part of the body that extends from the shoulder to the wrist
- **Body**—The torso, including the shoulders and hips
- **Finish**—The instant that a swimmer touches the wall at the end of the prescribed distance
- **Horizontal**—Parallel to the surface of the water
- **May**—Permissive, not mandatory

Definitions

- On the Back—Position of the body when the shoulders are at or past vertical towards the back
- On the Breast—Position of the body when the shoulders are at or past vertical towards the breast
- Propulsive—Having the power to propel
- Scissor Kick—Use of the top of the instep of one foot and the bottom of the other foot in the propulsive part of the kick
- Shall—Mandatory

Definitions

- Simultaneously—Occurring at the same time
- Touch—Contact with the end of the course
- Turn—A point where the swimmers reverse or change direction
- Vertical—Perpendicular to the water surface
- Wall—Vertical portion of the pool, contiguous surfaces of the deck and overflow gutter, the front portion of the starting block or platform, or the touchpad at the end of the course

Technical Rules

- Freestyle
- Backstroke
- Butterfly
- Breaststroke
- Individual Medley
- Relays

Technical Rules- Freestyle

Start

- Forward start.

Stroke/Kick

- Any style may be used. Must break surface throughout the race except swimmer may be submerged after start and each turn not more than 15 meters where head must break surface.

Turns/Finish

- Some part of swimmer must touch the wall at completion of each length or required distance.

Common Infractions- Freestyle

- Head did not break surface of water by 15 meter mark
- Walking on/springing from bottom
- No touch at turn

[USA Swimming Video - Freestyle](#)

Technical Rules- Backstroke

Start

In the water, facing the start end with both hands on the gutter or on the starting grips. Foot (heel to toes) placement will vary as follows:

- A: In a guttered pool - the feet may be above the water. Before or after the start, they must not be in or on the gutter, and they cannot be above or curled over the lip.
- B: In a pool with full-length wall pads, the feet may be above the water level.
- C: In a pool with backstroke ledges, at least one toe from each foot must be in contact with the wall. The rules regarding guttered pools or full-length wall pads will still apply.

Stroke/Kick

- The swimmer must remain on the back (shoulders at or past vertical towards the back). Any stroke or kick may be used.
- Throughout the race, some part of the body must break the surface, except for the start and after each turn, where the swimmer may be submerged for not more than 15 meters. At that point, the head must break the surface.

Technical Rules- Backstroke

Turns

- During turn swimmer may go past vertical to the breast and may utilize a continuous single or continuous simultaneous double arm pull to initiate the turn.
- Some part of the swimmer must touch the wall at the completion of each length.
- Shoulders at or past vertical toward back when feet leave wall.

Finish

- At the finish of the race, the touch can be made with any part of the body and the swimmer must be on the back.
- Additionally, once some part of the head of the swimmer has passed the 5 meter mark (long course and short course meters) or 5 yard mark (short course yards) immediately prior to reaching the finish, the swimmer may be completely submerged prior to the touch.

Common Infractions- Backstroke

- Toes above lip of gutter after start
- Head did not break surface of water by 15-meter mark
- Shoulders past vertical towards breast
- Delay initiating arm pull
- Delay initiating turn

[USA Swimming Video - Backstroke](#)

Technical Rules- Butterfly

Start

- Forward start

Stroke

- The swimmer must remain on the breast (shoulders at or past vertical towards the breast).
- Multiple kicks are permitted, but the first arm pull must bring the swimmer to the surface.
- The arms (shoulder to wrist) must be brought forward over the water and pulled back under the water. All arm movements must be simultaneous.
- Throughout the race, some part of the body must break the surface, except for the start and after each turn, where the swimmer may be submerged for not more than 15 meters. At that point, the head must break the surface.

Technical Rules- Butterfly

Kick

- Simultaneous up and down movement.
- No alternating, scissors, or breaststroke kicking movements.

Turns/Finish

- Shoulders at or past vertical toward breast when the swimmer leaves the wall.
- Touch should be made with both hands separated and simultaneous at, above, or below the water surface.



Common Infractions- Butterfly

- Head did not break surface of water by 15 meter mark
- Alternating kick
- Breaststroke kick
- Scissors kick
- Non-simultaneous arms
- Underwater recovery
- One hand touch
- Non-simultaneous touch
- Hands not separated at touch

[USA Swimming Video - Butterfly](#)

Technical Rules- Breaststroke

Start

- Forward start.

Stroke

- The swimmer must remain on the breast (shoulders at or past vertical towards the breast).
- The cycle is one arm pull and one leg kick in that order.
- The arm pull cannot bring the hands past the hipline, except for the first arm pull after the start and after each turn.
- The recovery of the hands can be on, under or above the water.
- The elbows must remain under water except for the last stroke before the turn or finish.
- All arm movements must be simultaneous.
- The head must break the surface by the widest point of the second stroke and must break the surface during each complete cycle.

Technical Rules- Breaststroke

Kick

- After start and each turn, prior to the first breaststroke kick, a single butterfly kick is permitted.
- Movement of the legs shall be simultaneous vertically and horizontally.
- Feet turned out during propulsive part of kick.
- No alternating, scissors, or butterfly kick, except as stated, is allowed.

Turns/Finish

- Shoulders at or past vertical toward breast when feet leave wall.
- Touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. (same as butterfly)
- At the last stroke before the turn and at the finish, an arm stroke not followed by a leg kick is permitted. (incomplete stroke cycle is permitted)
- 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 stroke cycle preceding the touch.

Common Infractions- Breaststroke

- Head did not break surface of water by widest part of second stroke
- Butterfly kick
- Scissors kick
- Alternating kick
- Arms past hipline
- One hand touch
- Non-simultaneous touch
- Hands not separated at the touch

[USA Swimming Video - Breaststroke](#)

Technical Rules- Individual Medley

Start

- Forward start

Stroke/Kick

- Rules for each stroke apply.
- Must swim $\frac{1}{4}$ of event distance as prescribed in stroke, in order of Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle.
- May not swim in the style of the other three strokes during the freestyle leg.

Turns/Finish

- Intermediate turns conform to the turn rules for the stroke.
- Intermediate turns must follow the turn rules for each stroke. During freestyle turns, the swimmer may rotate past vertical toward the back, but must return to the breast prior to any kick or stroke.
- Transition turns between strokes must follow finish and start rules for each stroke.
- During the breaststroke to freestyle turn, the swimmer must return to the breast prior to any kick or stroke.

Common Infractions- Individual Medley

- Swimming more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the race in the style of butterfly, backstroke, or breaststroke

[USA Swimming Video – Individual Medley](#)

Technical Rules- Relays

Freestyle Relay

- Freestyle rules apply.
- Each swimmer must swim $\frac{1}{4}$ of distance.

Medley Relay

- Each team must swim all four strokes in this order: Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, and Freestyle. The rules for each stroke apply.
- Each swimmer must swim one-fourth of the event distance.
- During the freestyle leg, the swimmer cannot swim in the style of the previous three strokes, and except for turns, the swimmer must remain on the breast.
- During the turns, the swimmer may rotate past vertical toward the back, but must return to the breast prior to any kick or stroke

Takeoffs

- Swimmer's feet/foot must remain in contact with the starting platform until the incoming swimmer has touched the finish wall or pad.
- Taking off from the adjustable wedge alone is not allowed.

Common Infractions- Relays

- Early takeoff
- Swimming more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the race in the style of butterfly, backstroke, or breaststroke (if a medley relay)

[USA Swimming Video – Relays](#)

Working a Meet

- Contact Meet Referee in Advance
- Stroke Briefing
- Assignments and Jurisdiction
- Observation Techniques
- Reporting Disqualifications

Pursuing Certification

- On-Deck Training
- USA Swimming Non-Athlete Membership
- Background Check
- Athlete Protection Training
- Online Testing

QUESTIONS?

[Stroke & Turn Officials Clinic - Evaluation Form](#)

Additional Resources:

Answers to frequently asked questions: [Word Doc](#) - [PDF](#)

Final Steps: Becoming a Stroke/Turn Official - [Word Doc](#) - [PDF](#)

Stroke and Turn Judge Apprentice Checklist Form - [Word Doc](#) - [PDF](#) ®