

STROKE & TURN JUDGE

19 May 2017

This year, the RSL has adopted the option to use computer seeding. Teams must mutually agree to use computer seeding, in writing (e-mail concurrence is acceptable), at least five days before the meet. If computer seeding is used for a meet, Stroke & Turn Judges will be provided with a heat sheet that details which swimmer is in each lane. Swimmers will not have cards for their individual events, they will be brought to the blocks by the Clerks in accordance with the heat sheet. Only relay teams will continue to use cards for their races. If there is an infraction, the Stroke & Turn Judge will be able to fill out the top portion of the DQ slip with the data from the heat sheet rather than having to track down a card. The Referee should inform the Stroke & Turns during the officials briefing as to whether the meet will be run using Computer Seeding or with our legacy process.

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1. Duties of the Stroke & Turn Judge:

a. Read and know the RSL Rules.

(1) The RSL adheres to US Swimming Rules and Regulations, with the exception of the backstroke turn which is judged in accordance with Virginia High School League Rules and Regulations.

(2) Know the in-water start rules for relays.

b. All calls should be the same throughout the season - no surprises at finals.

c. One rule book for all ages – valid times and awards for swimmers who perform correctly.

d. Referee will assign your jurisdiction: Lane assignments and jurisdiction, uniform coverage, rotating positions is recommended.

e. Be in position to make a call, within the limits of uniform and fair coverage. This will involve some walking, and you will get wet. The judge should be past the flags to judge the turn and touch.

f. The referee should ask three questions: Where were you, what did you see, and what rule does that violate or why is that a DQ.

(1) Looking different or ugly is not a DQ.

(2) Not necessarily a DQ just because you've never seen it before.

(3) No DQ because you didn't see the swimmer touch, you must see that the swimmer did not touch. (Call only what you see, don't infer based on what you don't see)

g. Referee may call a DQ anywhere in the pool. No one, including the referee, can tell you to write a DQ for something you didn't see.

h. Give equal attention to each of the lanes in your jurisdiction, even when one or more are empty. The goal is to ensure equal coverage for each athlete in a race as well as from race to race. You should be perceived as observing, not scrutinizing.

i. Raise your hand immediately upon observing a disqualification or a suspected disqualification. You can always decide not to write a DQ, but if you didn't raise your hand, you can't make the call. Raise your hand with authority, but not enthusiasm. This demonstrates to those watching that you are confident in your call.

j. If asked to serve as a Relay Take-off judge, first observe the toes of the departing swimmer leave the block, then look down to confirm the incoming swimmer has touched the wall. This maximizes the benefit of the doubt to the swimmer. Relay take-offs are judged via dual confirmation. Two Relay Take-off judges are watching each exchange and both must witness the early departure before the DQ is confirmed. In this instance, the Relay Take-off Judge does not raise his hand but rather records the early take-off on a dual confirmation slip. After the race is over, the Referee will compare the slips and determine if a DQ has occurred.

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k. Remember, you are not here to punish those who swim illegally but rather to assist coaches in teaching their swimmers how to swim the strokes legally; and above all, you are ensuring a fair and equitable competition for all swimmers.

l. Benefit of the doubt **Always** goes to the swimmer!

2. Things that are DQs.

The book specifies what the swimmer must do; this is a (partial) list of things the swimmer must NOT do. The judge must raise his hand and write a DQ when they are certain the swimmer does any of these. Certain infractions are more likely to occur at particular points in the event, like after a start or turn. These are some of the more common infractions:

a. Breaststroke

- (1) Body not on the breast; that is shoulders past vertical toward the back anytime after start or after the swimmer leaves the wall after a turn.
- (2) Non-simultaneous arm movement.
- (3) Arm movement not in same horizontal plane.
- (4) Elbows above the water, and it is not the last stroke before a turn or the finish.
- (5) Hands beyond hipline after the first stroke.
- (6) Head under water for a complete stroke cycle, except for first stroke cycle after start and turn.
- (7) Two strokes with no kick.
- (8) Two kicks with no stroke.
- (9) Kicking before stroking after the start or a turn.
- (10) Head still under the water after hands turn inward from the widest part of the second stroke.
- (11) Non-simultaneous leg movement, including freestyle or scissors.
- (12) Any kick with the top of the foot (either foot not turned outward) like freestyle, butterfly or scissors, particularly after start or turn except for the one butterfly kick the athlete may take after the start of the first stroke and before the first breaststroke kick as allowed by rule.
- (13) Non-simultaneous two-hand touch at the turn or finish.
- (14) One hand or no hands touch at the turn or finish.
- (15) Standing on the bottom, except during a turn (USS 102.10)
- (16) Pulling on lane lanes (USS 102.10)

b. Butterfly

- (1) Body not on the breast; that is shoulders past vertical toward the back anytime after the start or after the swimmer leaves the wall after a turn.
- (2) Non-simultaneous arm movement
- (3) Completely submerged more than 15 meters after the start or a turn
- (4) Underwater arm recovery
 - (a) Might be intermittent breaststroke to breathe
 - (b) Might be partial stroke, hands forward underwater and finish stroke
 - (c) Might be partial stroke then underwater recovery prior to turn or finish
 - (d) *Simultaneous arm recovery with only some part of the arm above the water surface.*

Note: Interpretations of USA Swimming Rules Article 101.3 (Butterfly) dated June 6, 2010:
Reiterated the interpretation of the application of the rule requiring the arms to recover over the water:

- *Article 101.3.2 requires that, in the butterfly stroke, “both arms” must be brought forward*

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“over the water” and pulled back simultaneously. For purposes of Article 101.3.2, as it relates to the recovery of the arms in the butterfly stroke, it is the interpretation of the USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee that the “arm” is that portion of the body which extends from the shoulder to the wrist. It is also the interpretation of the Committee that “over the water” means that the arm, as defined above, must break the surface of the water during the recovery phase of each stroke.

- (5) Alternating (flutter or freestyle), scissors, or breaststroke kick
- (6) Non-simultaneous two-hand touch at a turn or the finish.
- (7) One hand or no hands touch at a turn or the finish.
- (8) Standing on the bottom, except during a turn (USS 102.10)
- (9) Pulling on lane lines (USS 102.10)

c. Backstroke

- (1) After the start, standing in the gutter or curling toes over the gutter. Before the start this infraction is the Starter’s responsibility.
- (2) Shoulders past vertical towards breast
 - (a) After the swimmer leaves the wall after start or turn,
 - (b) Before head passes flags prior to turn, or
 - (c) Before touch at finish.
- (3) Starting a second arm pull after rotating to breast prior to turn
- (4) Re-submerging during the swim
- (5) Standing on the bottom, except during a turn (USS 102.10)
- (6) Pulling on lane lines (USS 102.10)

d. Freestyle

- (1) Re-submerging during the swim
- (2) Walking or pushing off the bottom (USS 102.10)
- (3) Pulling on lane lines (USS 102.10)
- (4) Not touching the wall with some part of the body at each turn and at the finish (not required to touch with hand)

e. Individual Medley

- (1) Any stroke or kick disqualification above.
- (2) Repeating any stroke for freestyle.
- (3) Butterfly to backstroke turn
 - (a) Non-simultaneous two-hand touch
 - (b) One hand touch
 - (c) No hands touch
 - (d) Shoulders past vertical toward breast after swimmer leaves the wall
- (4) Backstroke to breaststroke turn
 - (a) Not on back (shoulders past vertical toward breast) before swimmer has touched the wall
 - (b) Not on breast (shoulders past vertical toward back) after swimmer leaves the wall
- (5) Breaststroke to freestyle turn
 - (a) Non-simultaneous two-hand touch
 - (b) One hand touch
 - (c) No hands touch

f. Relays

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- (1) Incorrect stroke, turn or finish as described above for individual stroke.
- (2) For relay take-off, feet have left the block and incoming swimmer has not touched the wall.
- (3) For in-the-water relay take-offs, the departing swimmer does not keep his hand on the wall until the incoming swimmer has touched the wall.

3. Testing: The only testing of Stroke & Turn Judges is the quiz included in the StrokeAndTurn.com website. Certification is granted through RSL training clinics, US Swimming certification, or Virginia High School League certification. Participation by itself at the RSL organized training session does not satisfy the certification requirement alone – a Stroke and Turn judge must have completed the website training materials and be tested (with certificate) as well.

All certified Stroke and Turn judges will be listed on the “List of Trained Officials” spreadsheet. If a judge is not listed at the time of the meet – then the judge is not certified to officiate. Additions, deletions, or modifications to this list should be addressed with the RSL Officials Committee Chair.

RSL Rules Section 10.6 defines the rules and responsibilities pertaining to the Stroke & Turn Judge.

RSL Rules Section 10.8 defines the rules and responsibilities of the Relay Take-off Judge, a responsibility often assigned to the Stroke & Turn Judge.

Given any discrepancy between the RSL Rules and this document, the RSL Rules shall take precedence.

The RSL Rules are available on the RSL’s official website, www.RSLSwimming.com. Click the “Read More” button under Resources, then the “Read More” button under Training, then select “RSL Rules.” This training document is also available under “RSL Stroke and Turn.”

For further information, refer to www.StrokeAndTurn.com.

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