

Referee Briefing Guidelines

Guidance on Level of Detail

The following information should be covered by the referee in their briefing to officials prior to the start of a session. Please use your judgment as to how much detail you need to go into when reviewing the rules for the strokes. The amount of detail may vary with the experience level of the officials and may be different on day 1 of a meet versus day 3.

Welcome and Overview

- Welcome
- Introduction of Referees, starters, Chief Timers, Advisory Referee (where there is one) and the Meet Manager
- A reminder that all members, including officials, are expected to follow the [Swim Alberta Code of Conduct and Ethics](#).
- Swim Alberta is committed to Safe Sport and believes that all members have the right to participate in a safe and inclusive training and competitive environment that is free of abuse, harassment, or discrimination.
- Remind officials that they are responsible for giving their full attention to the swimmers. Use of cellphones, smartphones or other electronic devices are not permitted. If you are expecting an emergency call please inform the officials coordinator/ chair or referee.
- Timing Systems and role of timers (i.e. – splits, bells, double laneing etc.)
- Infraction procedures as they relate to the session – timed final events, preliminaries, and finals.
§ Positioning of stroke and turn judges
- Judging of relay take-over's if applicable
- Overview of Strokes. It is important to speak to what the officials should be “seeing” as a legal stroke versus telling them what to look for or what they should not be seeing.
- Any other pertinent information to assist them in performing their roles and ensuring a technically proficient meet for the swimmers.
- A reminder to any official that is completing a deck evaluation, please let the referee know prior to the start of the session and see the referee after the session for feedback and to have your deck log signed if your evaluation is successful. Please follow up with your Club Officials Administrator directly to ensure the information is updated on the Swimming Canada database.

Stroke and Turn

The following information should be reviewed in the briefing as it relates to the strokes:

Please remind officials that we are there to judge the legality of the strokes. If in doubt the benefit goes to the swimmer. The judge must be 100% certain that what they observed was an infraction.

The official must be in the correct position to observe the swimmer(s). As an Inspector of Turns, if they are required to judge more than one lane and they have two swimmers coming in at the same time, they

should choose one lane and judge that lane. An Inspector of Turns is responsible for observing the last full pull into the wall on a turn until the point the swimmer takes their first full stroke after touching the wall. The Judge of Strokes is responsible for judging the entire length of the pool. They should assist the Inspector of Turns in judging the turns. The Judge of Strokes is also responsible for observing the 15-meter mark at the start of each race in Butterfly, Backstroke and Freestyle.

Freestyle:

- Some part of the head must surface by the 15-meter mark (recall rope) off the start and at each turn.
- Once the swimmer has surfaced, they must break the surface throughout the race, with any part of the body.
- The swimmer can swim any style.
- The swimmer must touch at every turn and at the finish.
- Walking along the bottom; pushing off the bottom in the direction of the race; or pulling on the lane ropes is not permitted.

Butterfly:

- Some part of the head must surface at the 15-meter mark off the start and at each turn; swimmer is allowed one or more leg kicks while under the water
- The swimmer is permitted one arm pull under the water at the start and at each turn, which must bring him to the surface of the water. After which,
- Both arms must be brought forward simultaneously over the water and brought backwards simultaneously under the water throughout the race
- The kick is the butterfly kick. (Masters swimmers are permitted to do a breaststroke kick). All up and down movements of the legs shall be simultaneous. The legs and feet need not be on the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other.
- The touch at the turn and at the final touch is with both hands separated and simultaneously, at, above or below the water surface. The hands may touch at different levels, but both hands must touch at the same time.

Backstroke:

- The start is from the water, the swimmer lines up facing the starting end with both hands holding the starting grips. The feet need not be under the water, but the toes are not permitted to bend over the lip or gutter.
- Some part of the head must surface at the 15-meter mark.
- Once the swimmer has surfaced, they must break the surface throughout the race.
- The swimmer must remain on the back throughout the race and is permitted to do any stroke on the back.
- At the turn, the swimmer may touch the wall on their back. It is also acceptable to use turns such as the so called “suicide” turn, or a “saucer” turn. These turns are executed while still on the back without the shoulders passing the 90 degrees vertical prior to the touch.
- OR, if they choose to do a tumble turn - Once on their breast, they may take an immediate continuous single arm pull or an immediate continuous simultaneous double arm pull. Once the

arm has completed the pull (the hand is past the hips), the swimmer must be initiating the turn. Kicking is acceptable if it is part of the turning action. The swimmer must be observed in total.

- At the completion of the turn, the swimmer must leave the wall on their back.
- The finish touch must be on the back and with some part of the body breaking the surface of the water.

Breaststroke:

- From the start and at each turn, the swimmer may take a full arm stroke completely back to the legs, followed by one breaststroke kick.
- At any time prior to the first breaststroke kick a single butterfly kick is permitted.
- At the widest part of the second arm pull, some part of the head must surface.
- The breaststroke kick is the only kick that is permitted throughout the stroke.
- All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and on the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.
- At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. The hands may touch at different levels, but both hands must touch at the same time.
- The swimmer must leave the wall on the breast.
- The elbows are to be in the water throughout the stroke with the exceptions of the last stroke before a turn and at the finish touch, where the swimmer may reach for the wall with the elbows out over the water.

Individual Medley (IM):

- The order for IM is butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle
- The freestyle stroke must be something other than fly, back or breast
- The finish touch of each stroke must be as they would finish each individual stroke; for example, with the backstroke, the swimmer must touch on their back. Medley Relay
- The order for the relay is backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle

Judging Relay Takeovers:

- The takeover judge is observing that the departing swimmer does not leave prior to the touch of the incoming swimmer.
- The judge will observe the departing swimmers' toes and once they have left the starting platform, the judge drops their eyes to the incoming swimmer to ensure that they have touched.
- The departing swimmer may be in motion on the starting platform prior to their toes leaving
- The swimmers **MUST** swim in the order their names appear on the relay entry card held by the timers. The timers should verify that swimmers name when the swimmer exits the pool after their leg of the relay.
- Any swimmer whose feet lose touch with the starting platform prior to the touch of the preceding swimmer will be disqualified. A swimmer who leaves early is not permitted to return to the start to touch out.

Backstroke Ledge:

- The Backstroke Ledge consists of three main components: the support, which sits on the starting block; the footrest, which sits in the water against the wall or pad; and the straps, which hold the footrest at the correct depth.
- Meet management will have a team to install and remove the ledges or the timers and/or inspector of turns (IT) will install the device. Initially the device is set at 0 and the top of the footrest is level with the surface of the water.
- If there is less than one IT per lane, the Referee may elect to have one timekeeper perform the duties described herein.
- The IT will ensure the straps are free of any twists or knots.
- Once the athlete arrives behind the block the IT will ask if the athlete will use the ledge. If yes, then the IT will place the footrest into the water. The swimmer will adjust the level of the ledge.
- Prior to the start of each heat, the IT or timer will ensure the straps are free of any twists or knots. Once the athlete arrives behind the block the IT or timer will ask the athlete if they will use the ledge. If “yes”, then the IT or timer will place the footrest into the water. The swimmer will then adjust the level of the ledge. On the referee’s first long whistle the IT must stand. On the second-long whistle, the IT must step forward to confirm that the swimmer’s toes are in contact with the wall (or touch pad). If so then the IT is to stand straight. If not, then the IT must raise their hand. The Starter will request the swimmers to relax and remind all swimmers to place their toes on the wall or pad. The swimmer will only have one chance to fix the position of their toes. After the announcement by the starter the referee will blow another long whistle. The IT must look again at the toes. If the toes are not in contact with the touchpad or the wall, this is an infraction. The IT should use the procedure outlined in the briefing to report the infraction to the referee at the conclusion of the race. At no time should the IT speak to the swimmer regarding the positioning of their toes.
- After the start of the race, the IT or timers are responsible to remove the footrest and place it under the block below the backstroke grips or on-top of the block behind the kick plate. For one-way swims, such as 50 back in a LC pool, the footrest need not be removed.
- At the conclusion of the event, the IT will remove the Ledge from the block, roll it up and place it behind the block on the deck.

Relays

Medley Relay:

- For the start, the process is the same as above. However, after the start of each heat, the entire device must be removed from the starting block to allow diving.
- Try to ensure that the straps do not become twisted when removing and placing the Ledge on the deck. This will make re-installing quicker and easier.
- Double Plunging: In the event that electronic timing is being used to judge relay takeovers, two timers must take a manual split at the exchange of each swimmer.

Freestyle Relays:

- Double Plunging: In the event that electronic timing is being used to judge relay takeovers, two timers must take a manual split at the exchange of each swimmer.

In-Water Relay Takeovers:

- Swimming Canada Relay Take-Over Rule States: *SW. 10.11 In relay events, the team of a swimmer whose feet lose touch with the starting platform before the preceding team-mate touches the wall shall be disqualified* - The interpretation for in-water relay take-overs is that the in-water swimmer's feet must be in contact with the wall until the previous swimmer touches.