

From: USMS Rules Committee
To: LMSC officers
Date: September 16, 2001

During the FINA World Championships, they enacted several changes to the technical rules of swimming which USA-Swimming, in turn, enacted on September 14, 2001 to become effective on September 20, 2001. Therefore, in accordance with 601.4.5B, the USMS rules of competition are also changed as of that date.

These changes are permissive relative to our current rules. Therefore anyone following our current rules will continue to be legal under the new rules. (You will have received separate action with respect to FINA's changing the butterfly rules.) The changes include:

- Allowing the elbows to be above the surface of the water on the final stroke prior to the turn, during the turn and at the finish. Previously, only the last stroke prior to the finish could have the elbows above the water.
- During the butterfly swim, the swimmer must be on the breast. Previously, the swimmers shoulders also needed to be in line with the surface of the water.
- A backstroke swimmer may be submerged at the finish of the race.

Below is a copy of the USMS rules which reflect these changes.

101.2. BREASTSTROKE

101.2.1—Start

The forward start shall be used.

101.2.2—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.

101.2.3—Kick

All vertical and lateral movements of the legs shall be simultaneous. The feet must be turned outward during the propulsive part of the kick movement. A scissors, flutter, or downward butterfly kick is not permitted. Breaking the surface with the feet shall not merit disqualification unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.

101.2.4—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 stroke 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 article 101.2.2 must be attained from the beginning of the first arm stroke.

101.2.5—Finish

At the finish, the body shall be on the breast and the touch shall be made with both hands 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.

101.3. BUTTERFLY

101.3.1—Start

The forward start shall be used.

101.3.2—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 the swimmer to the surface. (**Note:** After the start and after each turn, only one breaststroke kick is allowed prior to the arm pull that brings the swimmer 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 pulled back simultaneously.

101.3.3—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. The breaststroke or whip kick may be used exclusively or interchangeably with the dolphin kick while doing the butterfly stroke at any time during the race. However, when the breaststroke or whip kick is used, the arms must be recovered over the top of the water with each breaststroke or whip kick, except after the last such kick before the turn or finish. A scissors kicking movement is not permitted.

101.3.4—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.

101.3.5—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.

101.4. BACKSTROKE

101.4.1—Start

The backstroke start shall be used.

101.4.2—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 swimmer 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, at the finish and 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 of the water.

101.4.3—Turns

Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. During the turn the shoulders may turn past the vertical toward the breast, after which a continuous single arm pull or a continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to execute the turn. Once the body has left the position on the back, any kick or arm pull must be part of the continuous turning action. The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall.

Note: The swimmer who turns past vertical and, in a continuous motion, grabs the wall before pushing off with the feet while on the back is considered to have executed a "continuous turning action."

101.4.4—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.