



STROKE GUIDANCE FOR SWIMMERS

Four Seasons Swim Team

June 2011







Introduction

- This is a guide to the basic rules of each event at a Herndon Swim League meet
 - It focuses on the main rules swimmers must obey in an effort to help them avoid the frustration of disqualification (DQ)
 - We are a developmental league, this guide is primarily for our less experienced swimmers
- Most DQ's are easy to avoid – almost all DQ's are for 3 or 4 common violations
 - Please read this and share it with your swimmers
 - Remember – DQ's are to help teach, not punish






Introduction (contd.)

- Common DQ's are shown with this  symbol
 - The most frequent violations or ones that occur often with our least experienced swimmers are shown as 
- Our Coaching staff, Referees and Stroke & Turn judges are always happy to answer questions





General items

- We do DQ 8-and-unders – it's a teaching aid
 - But under-6 breaststroke is not an official scored event due to the complexity of the stroke rules
- A swimmer gets two false starts per event
 - After that they are DQ'd
- Touching a lane line is only a DQ if you gain forward propulsion from it
 - Its ok to hold it but DO NOT pull or push yourself 
- Swimming aids are not permitted
 - Unless the swimmer has a documented handicap
 - A coach may not touch a swimmer they assist/lead









Freestyle event

- Pretty much anything goes 😊
 - You can swim any style you like
- You must touch the wall when turning 🚫
 - You can touch with any part of your body
 - If you miss the wall you can swim back to it
- You may stand on the bottom
 - But you must not spring forwards or walk 🚫
- Remember
 - Younger swimmers must not pull themselves forwards using lane lines or the walls






Butterfly event

- Only one underwater arm pull at start/turn
 - It must bring the swimmer to the surface
 - You can do as many kicks as you want
- Arms must move forwards over the water 
 - Hands must re-enter the water simultaneously 
- No scissors or alternating movement of legs
 - Legs must move simultaneously
- At turn and finish you must touch with two hands simultaneously 
 - Do not reach out and grab the wall with one hand








Butterfly event (contd.)

- Finish and turn – a DQ to be careful of!
 - Once a swimmer starts a pull with their arms they must bring the arms forwards over the water to complete it
 - Sometimes a swimmer will start a pull near the wall and then realize they are too close and just lunge forwards with their arms underwater 
 - This is illegal 😞
 - Once the pull starts the arms must ‘recover’ over the water – cannot stretch forwards underwater





Backstroke event

- You must swim on your back
 - There is no 'style' requirement – as long as you are on your back you can use any stroke technique you like: e.g., just kick, just arms, etc.
 - A very common backstroke DQ is where the swimmer is looking for the finish wall, turns round to reach for it and their chest rotates past vertical so that they are now effectively on their front – you must stay on your back  
- You must not stand on the bottom 
 - The one exception is during a turn (see below)








Backstroke event (contd.)

- Turns – things to watch for...
 - You must touch the wall – any body part counts 😊
 - If you miss the wall you cannot swim back to it 🚫🚫
 - You do not have to do a flip turn!
 - You can touch while on your back, turn and go
 - If doing a flip turn you may flip to your front and then take a single pull 🚫
 - This is in addition to the pull that turns you onto your front
 - By the time you finish the pull on your front you must be either
 - Starting to execute a flip – you cannot coast in 🚫🚫
 - Have touched the wall and be pushing off backwards
 - You may touch the bottom briefly at this point – only!





Backstroke event (contd.)

- Turns – contd...
 - Whichever way you turn you must leave the wall on your back 
 - This does not mean you must be flat on your back - but you must not leave the wall having rotated such that your chest is facing downwards
- Finish
 - You finish when any part of your body touches the end wall
 - We prefer you do not use your head... 😊
 - Touching the bottom or rotating off your back before touching the finish wall is a DQ  






Breaststroke event

- Breaststroke has the highest ratio of DQ's 😞
 - It is a complex stroke with many rules – young swimmers should not get upset if DQ'd: it takes time to master it
- You must swim on your front
- Breaststroke has a stroke 'cycle' requirement
 - One arm pull must be followed by one leg kick 🚫
 - You cannot take multiple leg kicks per single arm pull
 - Your head must break the surface once per each stroke cycle 🚫






Breaststroke event (contd.)

- Start
 - After diving underwater the swimmer may
 - Take one full pull arm pull back to the waist
 - During this arm pull a single butterfly kick may optionally be executed
 - This is then followed by a single normal leg kick
 - The swimmer may then take one normal arm pull that must bring them to the surface
 - Less experienced swimmers will sometimes take too many arm pulls or leg kicks underwater 





Breaststroke event (contd.)

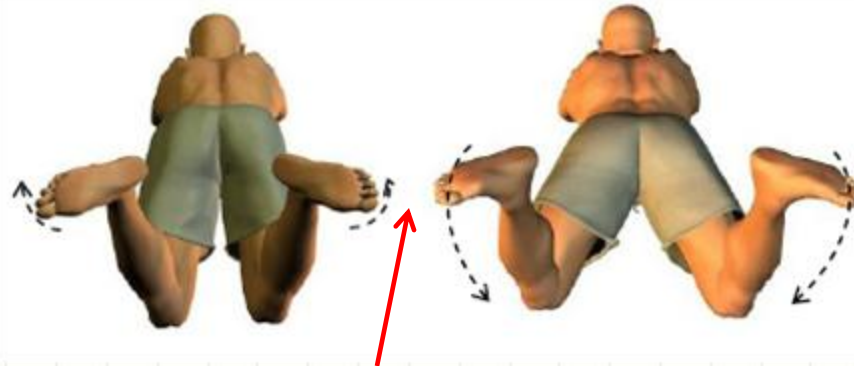
- Arms
 - Arms must move simultaneously
 - Thrust forwards and pulled backward together
 - Elbows must remain in contact with the water
 - Although hands can be thrust over the water
 - Arms must not be brought back past the waist 
 - Except for the one full pull at start and turn
- Turns/Finishes
 - Simultaneous two hand touch
 - Must stay on front coming into and leaving the wall








Breaststroke event (contd.)

- Legs – the most common source of DQ's
 - The legs must move simultaneously
 - The feet must turn outward during the kick




- Toes must point outward and propulsion should come from the bottom of the feet 
- A common DQ is where one foot is turned inward
 - No scissors, flutter or butterfly kicks 





Relays and IM

- Relays
 - Your feet may not leave the side of the pool until the incoming swimmer has touched 
 - Wait for the touch!
- Individual Medley (IM)
 - The rules are the same as the normal stroke rules
 - Except that the turn of each stroke must be executed according to 'finishing' rules of that stroke
 - That is, in the backstroke leg of the IM you must stay on your back at the turn – no flip turns!





THE END