

Stroke and Turn Guidelines and Best Practices

"The benefit of the doubt goes to the swimmer in every instance."

"Ugly is not necessarily illegal."

Take officiating seriously and work hard at it. Swimmers have a right to expect judges to know the rules and interpret them correctly.

Overview of Responsibilities

1. Study and KNOW the MSBSC Competition Rules.
2. Call violations as seen; don't guess or anticipate *"Call what you see, not what you don't see, and see what you call."*
3. Make decisions quickly and decisively. Exercise good judgment.
4. Be fair and consistent; *always give the swimmer the benefit of any doubt.*
5. Disregard team affiliation.
6. Judge all lanes in your jurisdiction EQUALLY and fairly. *This means, an empty lane is observed and scanned just as if it contains a swimmer.*
7. Work as many meets as possible.
8. Become involved in the Officials Training Committee (OTC) to keep up with rule changes, rule interpretations, and protocols.
9. Do not use any personal electronic devices while on deck. Maintain focus on the swimmers.
10. *Please refrain from cheering*, unless your own child is about to swim. A judge must always appear to be impartial.
11. Refrain from socializing with swimmers, coaches or spectators while on deck.
12. Admit a mistake if wrong; being fair to a swimmer is more important than your own ego.

Duties

STROKE JUDGE -- ensures that the rules relating to the style of swimming designated for the event are being observed.

TURN JUDGE -- ensures that, when turning (including last stroke prior to and first stroke after a turn) or finishing, the swimmer complies with the turning and finishing rules applicable to the stroke used.

DQs: Overview

1. Stroke and Turn Judge can disqualify for stroke, turn or finish violations. Touch/Turn may disqualify from last stroke in, turn, and first stroke out.
2. Be prepared to accurately answer the "3 Questions" from the Meet Director, if asked, using the language of the rulebook: "Where were you? (Jurisdiction)," "What did you see? (Description)," and "What rule was broken? (Infraction)."
3. Never suggest to another Official, swimmer or coach that a swimmer "came close" to being disqualified; *"close" is perfectly legal!*
4. Disqualifications:
 - a. Can be made only by the official within whose jurisdiction the infraction has been committed.
 - b. Must be based on personal observation.
 - c. Give the swimmer the benefit of any doubt.
 - d. Disregard team affiliation and the opinion of others.
 - e. Apply this simple test: BE SURE THE VIOLATION OCCURRED, UNDERSTAND CLEARLY WHAT IT IS AND BE PREPARED TO EXPLAIN IT.
 - f. Swimming across lanes does not disqualify a swimmer unless interference with another swimmer occurs at the Meet Director's discretion; however, a swimmer must start and finish in the same lane.
 - g. Grabbing lane dividers to assist forward motion is not permitted.