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**Sent:** Tuesday, June 13, 2017, 11:44:59 PM MDT

**Subject:** {RMSLSWIMMING} Butterfly Stroke Clarification from USA Swimming

**Hi All-**

**I ran out of time tonight and forgot to mention I had reached out for clarification on the rules for the overwater recovery of arms during the butterfly stroke..**

**It was suggested Dan and I might differ on our teaching of the rule. I should have been more adamant that Dan and I both agree on the source of the rules, THE USA Swimming technical rules, which the RMSI has used in the past and formally adopted in the by-laws this year. Interpretation of these rules may vary *slightly* from official to official but most will be in general agreement on what constitutes a legal stroke, of any kind.**

**Therefore I reached out to Scott Powell, our local zone coordinator for USA Swimming. I asked if he could clarify the rules and this was his response. It seems pretty self-explanatory. If you could pass this on to your starter/refs and stroke judges, we can hopefully develop a more consistent approach when judging the event. Thanks-**

>>As far as USA Swimming is concerned butterfly recovery does not require "space" between the arm and the water surface.

My interpretation has always been that rule 101.3.2 requires that, in the butterfly stroke, "both arms" must be brought forward "over the water" and pulled back simultaneously. It is my understanding that USA swimming defines the "arm" as that portion of the body from shoulder to wrist and that "over the water" mean that the "arm" must break the calm water surface during the recovery phase.

I know of no interpretation that requires the entire arm to be "over the water" -- thereby creating separation between the "arm" and the calm water surface. I have also confirmed this interpretation with Mike Dilli - Colorado's USA Swimming Officials Chair.

Here are two USA swimming references that I used to have this interpretation.

From: <https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/governance/lsc-managementdocuments/interpretations-legislation-bylaws/interpretations-made-by-the-rules-regs-comte-rev-aug-2015.pdf?sfvrsn=6>

## Interpretations of Article 101.3 (Butterfly)

June 7, 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 “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.**

In addition, in the document "USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Stroke & Turn", it has the following situation:

A swimmer in a 10 and under 50 butterfly with insufficient strength to lift her arms completely over the water during the recovery phase of her stroke, pushes her arms forward with her elbow and part of her forearm remaining in the water, but with the remainder of her forearm, her wrists, and her hands clearly out of the water. The Stroke Judge signals a disqualification for failure to “bring the arms forward over the water” as required by Rule 101.3.2. The Deck Referee overrules the call and explains that as long as any part of the arm recovers over the water the recovery requirement is met. Correct ruling?

**Recommended Resolution:** No. First, the arm is defined as that body part running from the tip of one’s shoulder to the wrist. So, by definition, this swimmer’s arms did not recover over the water. The Deck Referee erred by saying that the rule was satisfied if any part of the arm recovered over the water. In fact, the entire arm must recover over the water. However, there is no requirement that there be a visible space between the water and the recovering arms. Thus, had this swimmer been able to lift the arms sufficiently so that during the recovery the entire arms were above the water, or broke the surface of the water even though not completely clearing the water, the swim would have been legal.

**Applicable Rules:** 101.3.2<<

***Glenn E. Malloy***