

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, MY CHILD WAS DQ'd?

*2012 Edition (Official Stroke and Turn Handbook Rules for USA swimmers)

**QUICK AND ACCURATE IS OUR GOAL...
ACCURACY COMES FIRST AND SPEED WILL FOLLOW:**

**YOUNGER SWIMMERS: SLOW AND STEADY WILL GET YOU PLACED...
FAST AND SLOPPY WILL GET YOU DQ'd = ZERO POINTS!!!!**

If you're not a former swimmer, the strokes and their rules can be a cause of bewilderment. While the stroke rules are simple enough for a six year old to understand, most people do not have a copy of the USA Swimming Rules, so we'll briefly describe the strokes below (see USA Swimming web site for the complete stroke rules). The rules below are the USA Swimming rules as modified for use in the CNSL. Teams in other leagues may have slightly different rules.

Failure to follow the stroke rules will be denoted by a "DQ", Disqualification, of the swimmer and no points, times or ribbons will we award for them swim. I know that this is a harsh rule and it is one of the hardest things for many of the new swimmers to get use to at a meet.

The judging of the strokes is performed by the "Stroke and Turn" Officials. Each Official covers multiple lanes and when they detect a violation of a stroke rule the Official will note this by raise one and by write "DQ" with the reason on the time card. The Official will also make an effort to explain the rule violation to the swimmer.

***Freestyle**

The freestyle is defined as any means of swimming across the pool. Any stroke and kick are acceptable. There are, however, a few don'ts associated with this stroke, specifically: (1) You cannot walk on the bottom or pull yourself along using the lane lines and (2) In a 50 meter/yard race (two pool lengths) you must touch the wall at the 25 meter/yard end before touching the wall at the 50 meter end (This may seem obvious, but sometimes swimmers miss the wall at the turning end of the pool). (3) After the swimmer surfaces after a start or turn they must remain on the surface of the water.

***Backstroke**

Like the freestyle, almost anything goes on the backstroke as long as you **STAY ON YOUR BACK**. Watching swimmers learn the backstroke is a perverse sense of fun as they bounce off lane lines and wonder where they are. Eventually, they will learn to guide off the lane lines, use the overhead backstroke flags and the lane line markings to know where they are at in the pool, and count strokes from the flags to the wall.

Backstroke starts are different from all others because the swimmer is in the water, feet planted against the wall, and hanging to the lip on the pool awaiting the starter's signal.

If your swimmer is a backstroker, he or she will eventually learn the backstroke flip turn. This is the one exception to staying on your back and can be used only as part of a turn (not a finish) at the pool wall.

***Breaststroke**

The Breaststroke has two components, the kick and the arm pull. The pull and its recovery must both be under the chest and **cannot extend further back than the waist area**. The kick is a "frog" kick and the toes must be pointed **outward** during the propulsive part of the kick. The arm pull and kick must be in an alternating sequence (**pull then kick**) and the hands **may not go all the way to the hips**. Breaststroke turns and finishes require a simultaneous **two-hand touch**.

***Butterfly**

A well-executed butterfly (or Fly) is the most beautiful exhibition of power you will ever see in a swimming pool. Quite frankly, the fly is the hardest stroke for most swimmers to perfect and while they are learning it many look like they are drowning or in serious pain. There are two components of the fly; the arm pull and the kick. The **arm pull must be an over the water recovery** (elbows breaking the surface of the water) with the arms moving simultaneously. The kick is a dolphin style kick with **both legs moving simultaneously** up and then down. Unlike the Breaststroke, there is no requirement to alternate the kick and pull. Turns and finishes require a simultaneous **two-hand touch at the wall**.

***Individual Medley –**

The individual medley (or IM) is when an individual swims each of the four strokes in the sequence of Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle. We swim a 100 meter/yard IM, which means that 25 meter/yard, or one pool length, of each stroke is swum. In a 100 meter/yard IM, every turn is a stroke change and stroke finish rules apply to the transition. This means that the swimmer must complete a legal finish of the stroke before they began the next stroke (i.e. no Backstroke Flip Turns).

***Relays**

There are two kinds of Relays, the freestyle relay and the medley relay. Both involve a team of four swimmers, each swimming one quarter of the total distance. In the freestyle relay, each swimmer swims the freestyle. In the medley relay, the sequence is Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Freestyle (note this order is different from the IM).

In all relays, each swimmer must wait until the previous swimmer touches the wall prior to leaving the deck. Running starts or pushes from teammates (or parents) are not allowed.

If a swimmer misses a meet without notifying the coach in advance, the swimmer will not be able to participate in a relay the following meet. If a swimmer misses two meets without notice then the swimmer will not be able to participate in relays for the rest of the season.