

## AQUATICS RULE INTERPRETATIONS

### SECTION A - GENERAL RULES

- A-1. In cases not covered by these interpretations, the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) rules will govern.
- A-2. In-water starts will be required for athletes not cleared of Atlanto-Axial Instability (AAI) and when the pool depth is less than 4 feet.
- A-3. After the initial start of the race, athletes can stand on the bottom of the pool, but an athlete may not push off or lunge forward to gain an advantage from the bottom or side or end wall of the pool.
- A-4. A swimmer can hold onto the lane line but cannot pull themselves forward.
- A-5. The Individual Medley order of events is: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle.
- A-6. The Medley Relay order of events is: Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, Freestyle.
- A-7. Athletes can participate in a maximum of 3 events, comprised either of 2 individual events and 1 relay or 3 individual events. Special Olympics Colorado does not offer diving events.
- A-8. Athletes must compete in a Regional competition to attend the State Summer Games.
- A-9. The Games Rules Committee will make all final decisions.
- A-10. If during a race an athlete stops, does not progress further or does not make any movement forward for two minutes the athlete will be disqualified. If an athlete does not get into the pool or does not begin the race within 2 minutes that athlete will be disqualified. Timing of the two minutes is the responsibility of the closest stroke judge.
- A-11. Honest Effort Policy—At all levels of competition the submitted entry scores will be used to division athletes for medal round races. If an athlete has a 30% or more deviation from their final competition score and the submitted entry score from the district or the state competition, they will be disqualified and awarded a participation ribbon.
- A-12. At all times athletes are expected to compete to the best of their ability to ensure a quality competition at all levels. Coaches are expected to provide accurate/honest scores of their athlete's ability.
- A-13. When it is deemed necessary by the meet referee, a swimmer may be restricted from competition if bleeding or oozing from an open wound cannot be controlled or the wound cannot be covered appropriately. Appropriate covering may be the use of a bio-occlusive dressing (i.e. Tegaderm, pre-wrap and tape). If the area cannot be covered, then the athlete may be removed from the competition.

### SECTION B - UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

- B-1. Athletes in traditional events will not be allowed to wear any swim aids (fins, floats, webbed gloves).

- B-2. Athletes must wear regulation swimsuits and swim goggles. Cut off shorts or jean shorts will not be allowed. Only FINA approved high tech swimsuits are allowed. A list of approved high tech swimsuits can be found at [www.fina.org](http://www.fina.org) under the heading APPROVED SWIMSUITS. Athletes will not be allowed to wear jewelry or awards during competition
- B-3. No advertising or sponsorship is allowed to be worn on competition uniforms or warmups.

#### SECTION C - STARTS

- C-1. The start command at all levels of competition will include:
- Whistle, "Take your marks", strobe and tone start.  
Hearing impaired athletes start with a flag when a strobe is not available.
- C-2. Forward start -- At least one foot must be on the front edge of the starting platform or pool deck or one hand in contact with the starting platform or the end wall.
- C-3. Backward start -- Both hands grasping the starting platform or pool wall and both feet in contact with the wall and the heels in the water.
- C-4. False starts -- Swimmers will be disqualified for the following:
- a. The athlete does not remain motionless immediately prior to the start.
  - b. The athlete creates unnecessary delays in reporting to the start.
  - c. The athlete leaves before the starting signal.
- C-5. One false start and the swimmer will be disqualified from that event. There will be no restart of the race.
- C-6. The depth of the pool must be at least 4 feet to dive start from the side of the pool. The depth of the pool must be at least 5 feet to dive start from the starting blocks.
- C-7. At Summer Games, athletes may start all races using either a dive start from the side of the pool or an in-water start. For regional competition, information regarding starts will be in the event information coaches receive.
- C-8. In relay competition, the next swimmer must stay in contact with the pool deck or wall until the preceding swimmer touches the wall. Once the preceding swimmer touches the wall the next swimmer may start. Relay swimmers should exit the pool as soon as possible following the completion of their relay leg. Relay swimmers who cannot exit the water immediately may be allowed to remain in the lane until all relays have finished so long as they do not interfere with other swimmers. The athlete should stand away from the end of the pool, close to the lane rope without interfering with swimmers in the next lane.

#### SECTION D - BACKSTROKE

- D-1. Any kick or stroke is permitted as long as the athletes remain on their back.
- D-2. Some part of the body must contact the end wall during the turn.
- D-3. A backward start is required.

## SECTION E - BREASTSTROKE

- E-1. A forward start is required.
- E-2. On the start or turn-- only one arm stroke and one leg kick may be made while underwater.
- E-3. No scissors, flutter, or downward butterfly kick is permitted.
- E-4. The turn requires a simultaneous touch with two hands.
- E-5. The finish requires contact with the finish end with both hands simultaneously.
- E-6. The head must break the surface of the water for each stroke.
- E-7. Breaststroke must be performed on the chest.

## SECTION F - BUTTERFLY

- F-1. A forward start is required.
- F-2. Scissors, breaststroke, or flutter kick is not permitted.
- F-3. The turn will require a simultaneous touch with two hands.
- F-4. The finish requires contact with the finish end with both hands simultaneously.
- F-5. Arms must recover simultaneously and above the water.

## SECTION G - FREESTYLE

- G-1. A forward start is required.
- G-2. Any body position, stroke, or kick is permitted.
- G-3. The turn requires that some part of the body contacts the end wall.
- G-4. The finish requires contact with the finish end by any part of the swimmer.

## SECTION H – LEAD UP EVENTS

- H-1. Each athlete is responsible for having his/her own Class A certified coach/assistant coach with them in the water. Day of volunteers will not be provided or be in the water with athletes.
- H-2. The depth of the pool should be no more than 1 meter (3.5 feet) deep for walking events.
- H-3. For flotation events, each athlete is responsible for his/her own flotation device. The device must be of the body wrap around type such that if the athlete were to not be able to hold onto the device, the device would still support the athlete with his/her face out of the water (flotation devices such as inner tubes or floats that wrap around the arms are not acceptable for use at any time).
- H-4. No flotation device is allowed for any event other than the specified flotation events.

- H-5. Walking events – The swimmer must have at least one foot touching the bottom of the pool at all times.
- H-6. Unassisted Swims – Athletes must swim the full distance with no physical assistance.
- H-7. Assisted Swims
  - a. The assistant may touch, guide or direct the athlete, but may not support or assist with the athlete's forward movement.
  - b. The assistant may be in the pool or on the deck. The athlete is allowed to use a flotation device (listed above under the lead up events).