



## Disqualification - and how to avoid it

*Most swimmers get disqualified at some point in their swimming career. Often young swimmers and their parents are unsure of the disqualification rules. Here is a list of the most common reasons for disqualifications.*

### DQs at the start

Moving at the start. After the starter has said “take your marks” swimmers must remain absolutely still on the block or in the water, until the starting signal has sounded. This includes fiddling with goggles. Get into the habit of looking at the water (or wall on backstroke) NOT the starter.

Swimmers should not leave the water at the end of a race until authorised by the Referee. If time pads are being used, swimmers must not climb out over them, but progress under the lane rope(s) and exit at the side of the pool. Swimmers must ensure they do not impede any swimmer in a race (as may occur in a relay) as this will be a disqualification.

### Freestyle

- Swimmers must touch the wall at every turn (ideally with both feet) and with one hand at the finish of the race.
- Start & Turn – The swimmer must surface at or before 15m.
- Turn – The swimmer must touch the wall with some part of the body.
- Swimmers will be disqualified if they take or step/walk on the bottom of the pool, although they can stop and stand still if necessary.
- Any stroke can be swum, generally it is front crawl

### Backstroke

- Start – Feet or toes must not curl over any gutter
- Start & Turn – The swimmer must surface at or before 15m, and some part of the body must break the surface throughout the race (until the next turn or finish).
- Body position – Must remain on the back throughout the swim (shoulders must not go beyond vertical), except when executing a turn.
- Non continuous turning action. Gliding, kicking or pulling into a turn is not permitted. **EXCEPT** a continuous single or continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to initiate the turn.
- Turn; forward roll – here the swimmer rolls onto the front, takes one stroke then the arms pull them into the turn. There must be no kicking once the arm pull has been completed,

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and no gliding. This turn must be continuous, and is frequently the reason for disqualification in backstroke.

- Swimmers must have returned to their backs upon leaving the wall. Do not get into habit of pushing off on side.
- Swimmers must practice counting how many arm strokes to do from the flags into the turn and at the finish and **NOT** look for the wall.
- Finish – Must be on the back, not having the shoulders past vertical (onto the front).

## **Breaststroke**

- Incorrect start or incorrect turn.

After the start and after each turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to their legs. Their head must break the surface of the water before their hands turn inwards at the widest part of their second stroke.

A single downward dolphin kick is permitted followed by one breaststroke leg kick while totally underwater.

Turn & Finish – Both hands must touch together.

- All arm and leg movements must be simultaneous and on the same horizontal plane.
- Body position – the swimmer must remain on the breast.
- The hands shall not be brought back to the hips other than at the start and turns.
- 2 handed touch, swimmers must touch the wall at the turn and the finish with both hands simultaneously.
- Feet not dorsiflexed - The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive phase of the kick.
- Incorrect kick - No alternating, scissor or butterfly kicking is permitted.
- Taking two strokes under water at the start or on the turns.

## **Butterfly**

- Arms not clearing. There should be air between the arms and the water surface throughout the race.
- Arms must be brought forward together and brought back simultaneously.
- Alternating legs. Legs must move together and remain in the same relative horizontal plane. (no alternating kick)
- Incorrect touch. Swimmers must touch the wall at the turn and the finish with both hands simultaneously.

## **Individual Medley**

- Order of swimming - butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.
- Make sure you use the correct finish for each stroke ie, fly – 2 handed touch, backstroke – on the back, breaststroke – 2 handed touch.
- Do not turn onto the front when performing a backstroke to breaststroke turn, must touch on back and then rotate over onto front.

## **Relays – In general**

- Strokes – These are as per the rules of each stroke.
- Take Over – The incoming swimmer must touch the wall before the outgoing swimmer's feet have left the block. There may be movement on the block, but the feet must not leave before the touch.
- Medley Relay – Must be in the correct stroke order – Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, Freestyle. Freestyle means any stroke, except Backstroke, Breaststroke or Butterfly.