



U.S. PARALYMPICS SWIMMING
Observing the best with integrity, knowledge and vision
TECHNICAL OFFICIALS BRIEFING

Suggested topics to cover during the officials briefing:

- **Welcome and Introductions**
- **Assignments**
- **Pool and Personnel Specifics**
- **Deck Protocol for officials**
 - **Entering and leaving the deck**
 - **Position at Race Start, Swimmer approaching walls and longer freestyle races**
 - **15M mark**
 - **Recall rope**
 - **Relief/Rotations**
- **Special Information**
- **Radio protocol for DQ's (pending rule infraction)**
- **Writing and Processing DQ's**
- **Relay take-off judges**
- **Lap counters for 500+ races**
- **Officiate by the rules – not the exception codes**

----- Cover the briefing for the strokes below which are relevant for the current session this document may be distributed to the officials and then the high points covered if the person doing the stroke briefing is comfortable with this approach. Please do not stand and read the document at the officials meeting in its entirety – it is intended as a prompt/guide -----

OFFICIATING APPROACH

The U.S. Paralympics Swimming official's mission statement is

“Observing the best with integrity, knowledge and vision”

Based on this mission statement, the primary objective of the officials on the deck at a U.S. Paralympics Swimming meet is not to enforce the rules, the primary objective is to **defend the athletes who adhere to the rules**, by penalizing the athletes who bend, ignore or cheat on the rules.

FREESTYLE

START - From the starting platform, on the deck or in the water. Upon the “Takes your marks” command at least one foot must be at the front of the blocks. (11.1.2)

- An athlete with only one (1) fully functional leg does not need to have a foot at the front of the starting platform as long as they have one hand or other part of the arm at the front of the starting platform. (11.1.2.3)
- If a swimmer requires arm signals, they must be requested by the Team Leader/Coach at the Technical meeting (11.1.6)

For all national championship level (and below) meets held in the U.S., all starts with a hearing impaired swimmer in the field will automatically be given arms signals by the starter, regardless of if it has been requested or not

- Sports class S/SB/SM1-3 are permitted to have their foot/feet or the ends of their limbs held to the wall. (11.1.2.7)

BODY POSITION

- Swimmer may be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters after the start and each turn. (11.2.3)
- If submerged at start and turns, head must break the water surface by the 15-meter mark. (11.2.3)
- After surfacing, some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race.
- For S1-5 swimmers, during each complete stroke cycle some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water. (One stroke cycle is one full rotation of the shoulder joint/s and/or one up and down movement of the hip joints.) (11.2.3.1)

STROKE - Any style may be used, except in the individual medley or the medley relay events, where freestyle means any style other than backstroke, breaststroke or butterfly. (11.2.1)

KICK - Any style may be used.

TURN/FINISH - Some part of the swimmer must touch the wall upon completion of each length and at the finish. (11.2.2)



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BACKSTROKE

START

- Start in the water with back to the course with both hands holding the starting place (11.3.1)
- If athlete is unable to grip (E) may use one hand (11.3.1.1) or if unable to grip with both hands, it is permissible to hold the end of pool (Top of the deck - not the gutter) (11.3.1.2)
- May have exceptions for assistant (A) or starting device (Y) or one hand start on the grip (1)
- Standing in the gutter or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter is prohibited.
- Swimmers with “unable to grip for backstroke start (E) exception shall be permitted to use the end of the pool or a starting device (Y).
- When using a backstroke ledge at the start, the toes (or parts thereof) must be in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad.

BODY POSITION

- Must remain “on the back”, during the swim.
- Must be on the back leaving the wall
- Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except at the start and turn where it is permissible for the swimmer to be fully submerged for not more than 15 meters, by which point the head must have broken the surface (11.3.3)

STROKE

- Any stroke style may be used.
- For S1-5 swimmers, some part of the body must break the surface of the water every stroke cycle. (11.3.4.1). (One stroke cycle is one full rotation of the shoulder joint/s and/or one up and down movement of the hip joints.)

KICK - Any kick style may be used.

TURN/FINISH

- Some part of the body must touch at the turn and finish in his/her respective lane. (11.3.4)
- May turn onto the breast while executing the turn if the turning motion is continuous and immediate arm stroke initiates the turn. (11.3.4)
(For arm stroke to initiate the turn, by the time the arm/hand is extended along the body, the stroke has completed so turn must be initiated prior to then).
- Must be on back leaving the wall. (11.3.4)
- For swimmers with no arms or use of his/her arms during the turn there can be no kick independent of the turning action (11.3.4.1)

BREASTSTROKE

START - Forward start.

BODY POSITION

- Must remain on the breast.
- Swimmer who cannot push off with their legs may perform one non simultaneous stroke when starting in the water and at the turn. Arms need not be on the same horizontal plane to attain the breast position. (11.4.1.1)

STROKE

- Stroke consists of cycle of one arm pull and one kick in that order.
- At the start and turn the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs during which the swimmer may be submerged. A single butterfly kick is permitted prior to the first breaststroke kick. (11.4.1)
- Head must break the surface before the hands turn inwards at widest part of the second stroke. (11.4.1)
- During each complete cycle of one arm stroke and one leg kick, head must break the surface of the water except at the start and turn. (11.4.4)
- Hands must not be past the hip line except during the first stroke after the start and turn. (11.4.3)
- Hands recovered under, on or over water from the breast with elbows under the water except at touch during turns and finish. (11.4.3)



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- All movement of the arm/s shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane with no alternating movement. (11.4.2)
- A swimmer with lower limb disability (12) must show intent of simultaneous movement and show intent to kick in the same plane throughout the race or trail/drag the leg/s throughout the race (11.4.4.1)
- In the case where the athlete does not have any functional arms or functional legs, then, one arm stroke or leg kick shall constitute a full stroke cycle (11.4.2.1)

KICK

- All movement of the legs must simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane. (11.4.4)
- If nonfunctioning legs must show intent on the same horizontal plane (11.4.4.1)
- Feet must be turned outward during the propulsive part of the kick scissors or downward dolphin is not permitted except at the start, but breaking the surface of the water is permitted except as noted in 11.4.1

TURN/FINISH

- Head may be submerged after the last arm pull prior to the touch, provided it breaks the surface of the water at some point during the last complete or incomplete cycle preceding the touch.
- The touch is made with both hands simultaneously.
 - If different length arms, only longest one must touch, but both must stretch forward simultaneously. (11.4.6.1)
 - If arms too short to stretch above head, shall touch with any part of the upper body (11.4.6.2)
 - If a swimmer can only use one arm during the stroke (As determined by the code of exceptions) (2 or 3), they must touch with one hand/arm that is used for the stroke cycle only. (11.4.6.3)
 - If an athlete is not doing a “legal” arm stroke with both arms, then the exception codes dictate the following:
 - (2) Swimmer MUST use one arm and touch with one hand
 - (3) Swimmer must swim with both arms and attempt to touch with both hands
 - If restricted by the lane rope, SB11 & SB12 not disqualified for non-simultaneous touch. (11.4.6.5)

BUTTERFLY

START - Forward start

BODY POSITION

- From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and each turn, the body shall be kept on the breast (11.5.1)
- Swimmer can be submerged at the start and after the turn, but head must break the surface prior to the 15-meter mark. Swimmer must remain on the surface until the next turn or finish. (11.5.5)
- At start and turns, swimmers unable to push off with the legs may perform one arm stroke that may not be simultaneous or on the same horizontal plane, to attain the position on the breast. (11.5.1.1)

STROKE

- At the start and turn one or more kicks and one “arm pull” under water is allowed. The arm pull must bring the swimmer to the surface (11.5.5)
- Both arms must be brought forward simultaneously over the water and brought backward simultaneously. (11.5.2)
 - Arm is defined as from the shoulder to the wrist. Arm does not have to clear the surface of the water, but must break the surface*
- Where part of an arm is missing, the limb is still to be brought forward simultaneously. (11.2.3)
- Once a swimmer surfaces, they must remain on the surface until the next turn or the finish. (11.5.5)
- Where an athlete can only use one arm for the stroke (4) the arm shall be brought forward over the surface of the water. Athlete’s body must remain in line with the normal water surface. (11.5.2.5)
 - If an athlete is not doing a “legal” arm stroke with both arms, then the exception codes dictate the following:
 - (4) Swimmer MUST use one arm and touch with one hand
 - (5) Swimmer must swim with both arms and attempt to touch with both hands

KICK

- All up and down movement of feet and legs must be simultaneous (11.5.3)
- Feet and legs may not alternate, but do not have to be on the same level.
- If no legs, or nonfunctioning legs, legs shall drag. (11.5.3.1)



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TURN/FINISH

- The touch is made with both hands simultaneously.
- If different length arms, only longest one must touch, but both must stretch forward simultaneously.
- If arms too short to stretch above head shall touch with any part of the upper body.
- If swimmer can only use one arm for the stroke (As determined by the code of exceptions) (4 or 5), the swimmer must touch with one hand/arm that is used for the stroke cycle. (11.5.2.4)
- If swimmer uses both arms, but has restrictions in the shoulder/elbow, only the longer arm must touch, but both arms must be stretched forward simultaneously (3.5.4.4).
- If S11 and S12 are prevented from simultaneous recovery of the arms because of the lane rope shall not be disqualified.

INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

- START** - Forward start
- BODY POSITION** - Rules for each stroke apply
- STROKE** - Rules for each stroke apply
- KICK** - Rules for each stroke apply

TURN/FINISH

- Intermediate turns conform to the rules for that stroke. Transition between strokes must conform to the finish rules for that stroke
- 150m IM order - Back, Breast, Freestyle
- Swimmer must execute a different stroke for each length.
- Freestyle leg must be some stroke other than those performed in the other legs of the swim.
- In Freestyle leg, swimmer must be on the breast except when executing a turn. Athlete must return to their breast before executing a kick or stroke.

RELAY

TAKEOFF


- Feet/foot must maintain contact with starting place until incoming swimmer has touched wall/pad. Watch the foot leave and then check the wall – NOT vice versa!
- Breaststroke may be swum in the freestyle relay but the swimmer must swim as the higher of their S or SB classes if they differ.
- FCS classification S1-S5 may remain in the lane until the race is completed.

JURISDICTION

STROKE JUDGE Observe from outside lane into the middle of the pool. Walk full length of the pool, with a lead/lag so whole field is covered. Jurisdiction is wall to wall.

TURN JUDGE – At the “start” from the start of the race to the first complete arm stroke, except in Breaststroke, where it shall be the second arm stroke.

- At the “turn” from the beginning of the last arm stroke before touching, and ending with the completion of the first arm stroke after the turn, except in Breaststroke, where it shall be the second arm stroke. At the “finish” ensure that the swimmers finish according to finish rule.

 For WPS World Championships and WPS Sanctioned competitions (World Series hosted in the U.S.), both the Chief Inspector of Turns (10.2.6.2) and the Inspector Turns (10.2.7.8) shall report DSQ’s directly to the Referee. For **all other meets hosted in the U.S.**, the Inspector of Turns shall report DSQ’s to the Chief Inspector of Turns unless otherwise instructed. It is permissible for the Chief Inspector of Turns to make a call on an



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infraction, but this will be handled on a meet by meet basis and decided by the Referee prior to the competition session.

RADIO PROTOCOL

If radios are used during competition, the aim is to notify the Referee and Control Room Supervisor when a possible disqualification has occurred so that the final results can be held until the call/paperwork is examined and resolved.

As a result, the conversation on the radio should be informative and brief. The following is an example of the conversation(s) expected:

CiT: *Chief Inspector to Referee, possible disqualification on the turn end, Event 5, Heat 2, Lane 6 (or current heat - if the heat is still in the water)*

Referee: *Possible disqualification on the turn end, Event 5, Heat 2, Lane 6 acknowledged.*

If the confirmation does not state the correct heat, then the following is an example of the conversation(s) expected:

CiT: *Chief Inspector to Referee, Correction to the last confirmation. Possible disqualification is for the turn end, Event 5, Heat 2, Lane 6 (or current heat - if the heat is still in the water)*

Referee: *Possible disqualification on the turn end, Event 5, Heat 2, Lane 6 confirmed.*

If the DSQ is subsequently withdrawn prior to being delivered to the Referee, then the following is an example of the conversation expected:

CiT: *Chief Inspector to Referee, possible disqualification on the turn end, Event 5, Heat 2, Lane 6 (or current heat - if the heat is still in the water) has been withdrawn*

Referee: *Possible disqualification on the turn end, Event 5, Heat 2, Lane 6 withdrawn - confirmed.*

Ⓢ NOTE: The referee does not need to know the details of the disqualification over the radio, as that will be on the paperwork when it is delivered to them. Similarly, they do not need to grant or deny permission to write the DSQ, the official is empowered to make that determination as they observed the infraction. The Referee may accept/decline the DSQ once they have seen the form.



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DECK REFEREES and STARTERS

EXCEPTION CODES

- Check the exception codes for Starting Devices(Y), Assistants (A), Cannot grip (E), One hand Start (1), Hearing Impaired (H).

STARTS

- Feet starts are only permitted for swimmers class S1-S3
- Ensure legs are not held up in the bent position for a “push” start when legs are released and drop down into extended position.

Referees-responsibilities

- Make sure everyone is at the start and in a position where they can get ready.
- If towels on the block, ensure there is only one layer – and does not alter the height of the block
- Hand the event to the Starter as quickly as possible so their focus is on the athletes rather than the referee. Referees do not need to do the starters job and wait until every swimmer is ready to start, they just need to ensure all the swimmers are up on the blocks, or at the starting position.
- If any anomalies which cannot be handled by starter using the starting device speaker, the Referee should approach and speak to the swimmers.
- It is the starter’s job to make sure swimmers are ready to start before the command is given.

Starters

- Do not rush your starts. Make sure everyone is **ready to start** before giving the command.
- If they have involuntary movements (Spasms, etc.) after ‘Take your marks’ get them in the water, do not hold or stand them.
- Watch for sculling on the backstroke and feet starts after ‘Take your marks’.
- Check there is one foot at the front of the block after the command ‘Take your marks’ unless swimmer only has one functional leg, in which case one hand or limb should be at the front of the block.
- Watch everyone is ‘Up’ after the start before disengaging.

Finishes

- Referee and/or Starter – take order of finish
- Referee – two short clear whistles to clear the pool
- On 50 and 150m races, off duty Referee or Starter does Order of Finish. Off duty Referee will clear the pool.

GENERAL

- If the swimmers are in the water, the Session referee and the Stroke judges must never turn away from the pool. Watch until all swimmers exit the pool.
- S11’s must have a tapper at each end of the pool and they must tap the swimmer at the turn and finish of the race.
- Tapper’s for classes S12 and S13 are optional
- FCS swimmers may have a tapper if they have a medical certificate.
- S11’s must have goggles checked when exiting the pool – this will be done by Session Referee/Chief inspector of Turns or the Stroke Judge (Choose one).
- Classes S1-S3 may have their feet held to the wall (F)
- Position and number of lifeguards – agree upon procedure for getting assistance