



## **Introduction**

This document is intended as a guide to assist the officials at swim meet conducted using **World Para Swimming (WPS)** rules to quickly identify and adjust to the differences between a swim meet run under USA Swimming/FINA rules and one run under World Para Swimming rules.

This document is not intended to replace the World Para Swimming Rule book, but attempts to point out some of the differences between the two codes of rules that may not be obvious when you read the World Para Swimming rulebook. If you have questions or doubts, always discuss any issues with either the World Para Swimming Technical Delegate (TD), or the U.S. Paralympics Swimming staff at the meet.

The first large difference is that at major competitions run under World Para Swimming rules, the Meet Referee does not have the final responsibility for the execution of the meet. A Technical Delegate (TD) will be appointed to oversee all aspects of the meet on both the wet and the dry side, and the Meet Referee will be one of the numerous roles who will report to the TD.

At any meets held in the U.S. which are not national championships or above, a TD will not be appointed.

## **Referee(s)**

World Para Swimming rules do not have any provisions for a Meet Referee, but provide for a Referee, who is typically what would be regarded as a Deck Referee and this position will be rotated on a daily basis. At meets held in the U.S. a decision has been made to appoint a Meet Referee to ensure a clean chain of command and consistency during the competition. . Since the meet referee is responsible for the officials and the running of the meet, there is nothing to prevent the delegation of these responsibilities to other qualified officials to lighten the load. This will then free up the meet referee to address the overall execution of the meet.

The Referee(s) is responsible for running the deck. You will work together with the Starters to ensure that the meet continues smoothly and without unavoidable interruptions. You will also coordinate with the Chief Inspector of Turns and the Stroke judges to ensure that athletes are all judged consistently and fairly. You must liaise frequently with the Technical Delegate (if one has been appointed for the meet) to ensure that the meet is being correctly officiated.

Some of the major differences for a meet run under World Para Swimming rules that you will be responsible for are:

- If there is a major problem or occurrence out of the norm, you should consult with the Technical Delegate.
- DQ's can be, and often are protested for a fee. This is not a reflection on the official, and should never be seen as such. It is a mechanism which the coach has available to advocate for their athlete.

- If the protest is turned down, the team/coach can ask with a Jury of Appeal at the meet and ask for a second independent review of the facts pertaining to the athlete's swim
- The World Para Technical Delegate has final say, and can override any DQ is which relate to an athlete's classification or disability.
- S11 swimmers must have their goggles checked at the end of every event to ensure that they have been totally blacked out. To do this, hold them up in front of you – do NOT place them on your face.
- When you approach an athlete, please talk to the athlete, not their assistant. The athlete may be visually impaired, but they can still tell the difference when someone speaks directly to them.
- Do not assume the athlete speaks or understands English.
- Normal whistle starts are used for the commencement of the race.
- At the completion of the event, swimmers must remain in the pool until the signal to clear the pool is given. This is two long whistles. Once the whistles to clear the pool is given, the swimmers must move to the side of the pool to exit, and must not exit over the bulkhead or deck. For swimmers with sight, you may also wave them to the side of the pool during, or immediately after the two whistles to clear the pool.
- If Finish Judge(s) have been assigned, these officials will have primary responsibility for taking Order of Finish at the completion of the race. Otherwise, the responsibility for this should be assigned to the Starters. The Deck Referee should also attempt to record the Order of Finish for each race as well for confirmation/completeness.
- When swimming 50m and 150m races, the off duty Deck Referee and Finish Judge/Starter will need to assume responsibility to record the Order of Finish at the other end of the pool.
- Ensure you watch ALL the swimmers in the water at all times. Need to be alert for the possibility of the need for medical or lifesaver intervention – particularly at the end of the race when the swimmers relax in the water and no one else is watching them.
- Stroke Judges must occasionally make a decision regarding watching the swimmers exit the pool or returning to the other end of the pool to be in position for the next race. The swimmer's safety should always take precedence over the official being in position for the next race.
- Assistants who are guiding or helping swimmers in the marshalling area/call room and at the starting platform must not talk to them. (You are looking to prevent last minute coaching on the deck, and/or any psychological disadvantage to the other swimmers). Blind swimmers are the exception – but they should only be talking to the swimmers for warnings and directions. Also, be alert for stopwatches and cameras in the assistant's pockets. Their sole reason for being allowed on the deck is to assist the swimmer.
- Swimmers are able to talk to the assistants but not vice versa
- S11 swimmers must have a tapper at both ends of the pool. (Tappers are optional for S12 and S13 classes).
- Tappers may only tap for a single swimmer in each race.
- If a swimmer does not have an exception for an Assistant (A) they must be alone in the call room/marshalling area and on the pool deck. Anyone accompanying the

swimmer should be asked to leave, as this additional support is an unfair advantage over the other swimmers. (At meets below National Championship level meets, this is relaxed in the U.S., and the facts are explained to the assistant so that they can start to prepare the athlete for higher level meets)

- Tappers must not be massaging athlete's shoulders, rubbing their back, etc. as they wait for their event. This is an unfair advantage to other swimmers as their tapper is helping them relax before the event.

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### **Control Room Supervisor**

Meets held under USA Swimming rules would typically appoint an Administration Referee. Under World Para Swimming rules this position has been renamed to a Control Room Supervisor, but the roles and responsibilities are the same

### **Chief Inspector of Turns (CloT)**

The primary responsibility for this position is to manage and brief the Stroke judges and Inspector of Turns prior to the start of each session. Your responsibilities will include, but are not limited to:

- Briefing and then assigning the officials to the positions on the deck prior to each session of competition.
- Explaining the officiating overlap and the procedural differences with DQ's between the Inspector of Turns (IOT's) and the Stroke judges.
- Ensuring the Inspector of Turn officials are in position prior to the commencement of competition, and that they remain in position and alert during the competition. (You are not responsible for the Stroke Judges during competition – they will work directly with the Referee(s)).

*At meets at the National Championship and above level, the IOT's will report their DQ's directly to the Referee. In the U.S. a decision has been made to retain the historical reporting of the DQ's to the CloT's to be in alignment with what the officials are used to at USA Swimming meets.*

- Observe the swimmers as they approach and leave the wall. If the Inspector of Turns observes an infraction, it will assist in any subsequent protest hearings if the Chief Inspector also observes and reports the swimmer.
- Inspectors of Turns will indicate they have observed an infraction during the turn or finish by continuing to stand when they step back from the edge of the pool. Upon this signal, the Chief Inspector of Turns should approach the standing official and determine if they have a potential DQ. If they do, and radios are being used at the meet, notify the referee that there is a potential DQ (Refer later in this document for radio protocol)
- The Chief Inspector of Turns will then forward the DQ slips to the relevant Referee. (May be a Session, Deck, or Admin referee based on the protocol agreed upon with the meet referee).
- Chief Inspector of Turns must work with the Referee, to ensure that:
  - Assistants guiding or helping swimmers to the block must not talk to them. Blind swimmers are the exception – but they should only be talking to the swimmers for warnings and directions.
  - Tapper must not be massaging athlete's shoulders, etc as they wait for their event. This is an unfair advantage to other swimmers as their tapper helps them relax before the event.

- S11 swimmers must have a tapper at each end of the pool. (Tappers are optional for other classes).
- Tappers may only tap for a single swimmer in each race.
- It is assumed that the tapper will tap the swimmer at the end of each length of the pool, but it is not mandatory for a tapper to tap the swimmer – this is between the tapper and the swimmer. (The tappers have been known to forget!)
- If you are not writing DQ's, you need to be alert for the possibility of the need for medical or life saver intervention at the end of the race when the swimmers relax in the water and no one is watching them.

### Inspector of Turns (IoT)

Responsible for the turns and finishes (Last arm stroke in and until the completion of the first arm stroke out).

- Will need to work in with the Tappers as they may change from one side of the lane to the other quickly, depending on where the swimmer is within the lane.
- Prior to each heat, check the exception codes on your sheet and familiarize yourself with what you can expect from each swimmer you will be responsible for judging.
- If you see an infraction, take one step back from the edge and remain standing until the Chief Inspector of Turns approaches. (Double check the exceptions on your sheet to make sure the swimmer does not have an exception, and start looking for the rule # in the World Para Swimming rule book which must be quoted on the DQ form).
- Watch to ensure that swimmers are tapped at both the turn and finish. If the tapper is distracted when the swimmer is approaching the wall, gently remind them that they are needed.
- Look for safety issues, like cuts, abrasions, additional taping, support personnel talking (coaching) and report these to the CIoT

### Stroke Judges

Will be walking Lead and Lag along the side of the pool to ensure the whole field is judged evenly.

- You will watch swimmers from wall to wall, and overlap with the (IoT's) as the swimmer approaches and leaves the wall.
- In the Individual Medley, it is a Stroke Judge's call to ensure that the freestyle leg of the race is swum in a manner/style that is different from the other legs of the race. With some of the disabilities, this will require that you remember what the other strokes looked like, so you can recognize if there is a difference.
- When you observe an infraction and radios are being used at the meet, notify the referee that there is a potential DQ (Refer later in this document for radio protocol). Write the DQ slip in a timely fashion, and forward it directly to the Referee.
- At the completion of each race, you will remain near the finish and observe the swimmers until they all exit from the pool. This is for safety reasons in case the athletes suffer a seizure, etc while they are in the water.

### Starter

The starter's primary duty at a World Para Swimming meet is the same as any other meet, to ensure a fair start for all the competitors.

Be aware:

- Watch for swimmers sculling during water starts (once the command has been given to ‘Take you marks’), as this is not stationary for the start – and should be called as a false start if the swimmers persists after a warning.
- Only S1, S2 and S3 class swimmers are eligible to do a Feet Start.
- If a swimmer’s feet are held, they must be held onto the wall, and get no “help” at the start. Be aware of assistants holding swimmers behind the knees so the legs are bent, as this allows the swimmer to “push” off the wall when their legs are released and gain an advantage they would not have if they were held correctly.
- Swimmers being ‘helped’ on the blocks must not be held past the 90 degrees, as this will give them an edge, or unfair start.
- If a swimmer does not have an exception for an Assistant (A), they must be alone on the pool deck. Anyone accompanying the swimmer must be asked to leave, as this additional support is an unfair advantage over the other swimmers. (In lower level and developmental meets with new swimmers, discretion should be used here, as the swimmers safety is paramount over the strict enforcement of the rule).

Backstroke swimmers must grip the starting place with both hands unless classified as (E) unable to grip, (1) one hand start or a (Y) starting device. In a pool that has a gutter in the wall, swimmers with an exception must hold onto the edge of the pool, and not the gutter.

An additional challenge for starters at a World Para Swimming meet is that some of the swimmers may experience tremors on the blocks. Since this is an involuntary action, providing the swimmer is not moving forward or backwards, the starter should proceed with the start. The tremors will often get worse if the swimmer attempts to maintain the starting position, or is asked to stand on the blocks.

### **Major Differences in the way Stroke Rules are Enforced**

The World Para Swimming rules are based upon the FINA rules, and although there is a lot of verbiage that has been included to cater for specific exceptions, there are very few real differences between USA Swimming/FINA rules and the World Para Swimming rules. The first time as an official on the pool deck at a World Para Swimming sanctioned/approved meet can be confusing. You must check the swimmers for compliance with the rules, and then have to double check the exception codes. By adhering to a few simple guidelines, the job of providing a good coverage of officiating becomes much simpler, while still catering to the exceptions codes.

**Always remember to judge by the rules, and then check the exception codes if an infraction is observed.**

### ***Butterfly***

- As the swimmer simultaneously brings the arms forward, (assuming there are two functional arms – else the simultaneous requirement is assumed for the single functioning arm) the arms from the shoulder to the wrist must break the surface of the water as they are brought forward. (Note: The entire arm does not have to be clear of

the water, as this may not be possible for some swimmers, but the arm from the shoulder to the wrist must break the surface of the water).

- If swimmers have no leg function, they are permitted a half stroke at the turn and the finish, with an underwater recovery to touch the wall.
- If a swimmer does not do a legal stroke and has an exception code of 4 or 5, these exception codes dictate how the swimmer must stroke and touch at the turns and finish as per the following:
  - 4 Swimmer must swim with one arm only, and must touch with one hand only.
  - 5 Swimmer must swim with both arms, and must attempt to touch with both hands.
- If a swimmer only uses one arm to stroke, they must keep the body in line with the normal surface of the water.

### ***Backstroke***

- If the swimmers leaves their back at the turn, the arm pull (single or simultaneous double arm pull) must initiate the turn. This means that if the swimmer's hand/arm completes the stroke before some other turning action has commenced, the arm pull did not initiate the turn, but was merely part of the turning action.

### ***Breaststroke***

- If swimmers have no leg function (hence cannot push off the wall), they are permitted one stroke at the start and at the turn where the arms may not be simultaneous or on the same horizontal plane, in order to assume the correct position on the breast.
- Ensuring that the head breaks the surface of the water during each stroke cycle before the hands start the recovery from the widest part of the stroke is sometimes difficult to judge when the swimmer has no hands, is performing a leg drag or has no legs. This does not relieve them of the requirement; it just means the officials must be more diligent.
- If a swimmer does not do a legal stroke and has an exception code of 2 or 3, these exception codes dictate how the swimmer must stroke and touch at the turns and finish as per the following:
  - 2 Swimmer must swim with one arm only, and must touch with one hand only
  - 3 Swimmer must swim with both arms, and must attempt to touch with both hands

### ***IM***

- The free style stroke cannot be the Back, Fly or Breast strokes. Based on the swimmers disability, it is sometimes challenging to tell the difference between some of the strokes. It is up to the Stroke judge to determine that the stroke the swimmer performed in the other three legs (other 2 legs for 150) of the IM is not the same stroke being performed in the free style leg of the race.

## General Guidelines

In a race with swimmers in all lanes, it is sometimes difficult to check the swimmers and the exception codes to determine if they are performing the stroke correctly. To assist, the following guidelines will usually be accurate and can be followed until you have an opportunity to check the exceptions once you have clearly observed the swimmers.

- If an assistant leads an apparently able-bodied athlete who is steady on their feet to the blocks, they are probably blind or visually impaired, and may have a tapper (S11's must have a tapper). If no tapper is visible, check to see if they are an S11 classification.
- If an assistant holds a swimmer's feet to the wall for a water start, the swimmer will usually have an exception for leg drag. Do not expect this swimmer to perform the correct Breaststroke kick, and remember about the exceptions for Butterfly and Breast at the start, turn and finish (See next point).
- If a swimmer is not using their legs during the race, they will be allowed:
  - One non-conforming stroke in the Breaststroke, where the arms are not on the same horizontal plane and are not simultaneous at the start and turn, in order to assume the position on the breast.
  - To perform a half stroke under water and then an underwater recovery at the turn and the finish while swimming Butterfly.
- In the strokes which have rules pertaining to the use of the arms and the legs (Breast and Fly), the swimmer must use or not use the arm or the leg for the entire race (or stroke in IM).

## RADIO PROTOCOL

If radios are used during competition, the aim is to notify the Referee and Control Room 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, potential disqualification on the turn end, Event 5, Heat 2, Lane 6*

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

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 notification. Potential disqualification is for the turn end, Event 5, Heat 2, Lane 6*

***Referee:*** *Potential 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, potential disqualification on the turn end, Event 5, Heat 2, Lane 6 has been withdrawn*

***Referee:*** *Potential disqualification on the turn end, Event 5, Heat 2, Lane 6 withdrawal 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 officials are empowered to make that determination based on what they observed.