

**APPENDIX E**  
**2008 L.S.A. Start, Stroke & Turn Rules**  
**(N.F.S.H.A. RULE 8, WITH EXCEPTIONS) - OFFICIAL COPY**

**SECTION 1 - STARTS AND FINISHES**

**ART. 1.** . . For a forward start, after a preliminary signal by whistle by the referee, the swimmers shall line up near their respective starting area. The referee shall then turn control of the swimmers to the starter. After receiving clearance from the referee, the starter shall direct the swimmers to “step up”, at which time each swimmer shall step up to the starting position on the pool deck. Upon the starting command, “Take your mark,” swimmers shall promptly assume a motionless position with their foot/feet at the front edge of the pool deck. When all swimmers are motionless, the starter shall activate a starting device.

**NOTE:** *With referee/starter permission, a swimmer may start in the water. The swimmer must be motionless and have at least one hand in contact with the end wall. A backstroke start is not permitted.*

**ART. 2.** . . For the backstroke start, after a preliminary signal by whistle by the referee, the swimmers shall line up near their respective starting area. The referee shall then turn control of the swimmers to the starter. After receiving clearance from the referee, the starter shall direct the swimmers to “step in”, at which time each swimmer shall line up in the water facing the starting end with both hands in contact with the end wall of the pool. Prior to the command “Take your mark” and until the feet leave the wall at the starting signal, the swimmer’s feet, including the toes, shall be completely under the surface of the water. Standing on or in the gutter or curling the toes over the lip of the gutter, immediately after the start is not permitted.

**ART. 3.** . . . Subject to the discretion of the referee/starter, (referee and starter in championship meets), a false start/infraction occurs when a swimmer:

- a. Unnecessarily delays in reporting for the start, or in assuming a starting position. Provided however, a swimmer/relay may be disqualified from an event in a dual meet where the delay in reporting for the start adversely affects other swimmers in the event, and shall be disqualified in a championship meet for failing to report to the clerk of course in time for the clerk’s release of the heat;
- b. Leaves the mark before the starting signal;
- c. Does not remain motionless immediately prior to the start. Other swimmers are to be released by the starter’s command, “Stand up.”

**ART. 4.** . . . In the forward start, swimmers may stand up or step away from the pool edge after the command “Stand up,” but they shall not enter the water or delay a new start.

**ART. 5.** . . In the backstroke start, swimmers may release from the starting position after the command “Stand up,” but they shall not leave the starting area nor unnecessarily delay a new start.

**ART. 6.** . . When one or more swimmers have obtained an unfair advantage at the start, all swimmers shall be recalled immediately by horn, or other sounding device.

**ART. 7.** . . To finish the race, the swimmer shall contact the finish end in the manner prescribed. When automatic timing/judging equipment is used, the swimmer must contact the touch pad to finish the race.

**PENALTY FOR FALSE START / INFRACTION**

1. For the second false start/infraction by the same swimmer or relay in the same heat, the swimmer or relay team is disqualified from the event and shall not swim.

2. In championship meets, dual confirmation of false start by the referee and starter is required for all false start determinations.
3. For a first false start (i.e. one not requiring disqualification) the starter or referee may give a verbal warning to the swimmer or team involved.

## **SECTION 2 - FORM OF INDIVIDUAL EVENTS**

### **ART. 1 . . BACKSTROKE**

- a. The backstroke start shall be used;
- b. Any stroke is permitted. The body shall remain on the back to the degree the shoulders do not turn over beyond the vertical plane except while executing a turn;
- c. Standing in or on the gutter or curling the toes over the lip of the gutter immediately after the start is not permitted.
- d. Any kick is permitted:
- e. The swimmer may be completely submerged during the turn or for a distance of not more than 16.4 yards (15 meters) after the start and each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface of the water;
- f. The turn requires that some part of the swimmer's body contact the end wall. After the swimmer's head has passed the backstroke flag, prior to the turn, the swimmer's upper shoulder may (but is not required to) rotate past the vertical toward the breast before the touch is completed provided such rotation is accompanied by an initiation of the turning action or continuation into the wall. The initiation of the turning action shall be accomplished by a single-arm or simultaneous double-arm pull, or in the absence of such pulls, by a downward, underwater movement of the head. After the initiation of the turning action, no additional arm pulls may be started; however, kicking and gliding actions are permitted. The swimmer shall assume a position on the back before the feet leave the wall;
- g. The finish requires completion of the required distance and contact with the finish pad (when automatic timing is used) or finish end by any part of the swimmer.
- h. For swimmers competing in the 6 years and under age group, the swimmer's upper shoulder may (but is not required to) rotate past the vertical toward the breast for the last six feet of the prescribed distance.

### **ART. 2 . . . BREASTSTROKE**

- a. The forward start shall be used;
- b. The body shall remain on the breast except while executing a turn;
- c. On the start or turn, one arm stroke beyond the hipline followed by one breaststroke kick may be made while the swimmer is underwater; except that after the initiation of such arm stroke and before the breaststroke kick, a single downward butterfly kick is permitted. Some part of the head must break the surface before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke after the start and after each turn;  
Thereafter:
  1. Hands shall not be brought back beyond the hipline;
  2. Some portion of the head must break the water surface sometime during each stroke cycle (one arm pull followed by one leg kick) except after the final arm pull to the turn or finish.
- d. There shall be no sculling with the hands at the end of the first arm stroke following the start or turn;
- e. The stroke requires that the arms shall move simultaneously and in the same horizontal plane, without any alternating movement. Both hands shall be pushed forward from the breast simultaneously on, above or under the surface of the water. Elbows must remain under the water except for the last stroke at the finish of the prescribed distance (butterfly recovery is not permitted at any time);

f. The kick requires the feet be drawn up with the knees bent. The feet must be turned outward during the propulsive part of the kick. All movement of the legs and feet shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane.

No scissors, flutter, or downward butterfly kick (developed from a flexing and extending of the knee) is permitted;

g. The turn requires a simultaneous touch with two hands, not necessarily on the same plane after which any manner or turn is permitted. The shoulders shall be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the feet leave the wall. The legal body position shall be regained prior to the first arm pull;

h. The finish requires completion of the required distance and contact with the finish pad (when automatic timing is used) or finish end with both hands simultaneously, not necessarily on the same plane.

i. For swimmers competing in the 8 years and under age group, violations of Section 2, Article 2 c.1 & 2, d, e, & f shall not result in disqualification unless the violation is consistent for at least half of the prescribed distance. This exception shall apply only where it appears the swimmer is attempting to perform the breaststroke throughout the entire race.

### **ART. 3 . . . BUTTERFLY**

a. The forward start shall be used;

b. The body shall remain on the breast except while executing a turn. After the start and after the turn, the swimmer is allowed one or more leg kicks, but only one arm pull under water;

c. The stroke requires that both arms simultaneously pull backward under the water, then simultaneously recover over the water. At any given time, corresponding points on both hands shall be at the same horizontal level;

d. The kick requires that both legs and feet move up and down simultaneously in the vertical plane. Scissors, breaststroke and alternating up and down movements of the legs are not permitted;

e. The turn requires a simultaneous touch with two hands, not necessarily on the same plane, after which any manner of turn is permitted. The shoulders shall be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the feet leave the wall. The legal body position shall be regained prior to the first arm pull;

f. The swimmer may be completely submerged for a distance of not more than 16.4 yards (15 meters) after the start and each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface of the water;

g. The finish requires completion of the required distance and contact with the finish pad (when automatic timing is used) or finish end with both hands simultaneously, not necessarily on the same plane.

h. For swimmers competing in the 8 years and under age group, violations of Section 2, Article 3 c & d shall not result in disqualification unless the violation is consistent for at least half of the prescribed distance. This exception shall apply only where it appears the swimmer is attempting to perform the butterfly throughout the entire race.

### **ART. 4 . . . FREESTYLE:**

a. The forward start shall be used;

b. Any body position, stroke and kick is permitted and any combination of styles may be used;

c. The turn requires that some part of the swimmer's body contact the end wall;

d. The swimmer may be completely submerged for a distance of not more than 16.4 yards (15 meters) after the start and each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface of the water;

e. The finish requires completion of the required distance and contact with the finish pad (when automatic timing is used) or finish end by any part of the swimmer.

#### **ART. 5 . . . INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY**

The individual medley begins with the forward start. Competitors shall swim the butterfly for the first quarter of the required distance of the complete race, the backstroke for the second quarter, the breaststroke for the third quarter and any stroke other than backstroke, breaststroke or butterfly for the last quarter. Competitors shall adhere during each quarter of the race to the position, stroke, kick turn, and finish rules governing the stroke being swum. Transition turns between strokes shall conform, before the touch, to the finish rules for the stroke being completed and, after the touch, to the turn rules for the stroke about to be swum.

**PENALTY FOR EVENT FORM VIOLATIONS: The swimmer is disqualified from the event.**

#### **SECTION 3 RELAY EVENTS**

##### **ART. 1 . . . MEDLEY RELAY**

The medley relay is swum by a team of four competitors, each swimming one quarter of the required distance of the race. The first shall use the backstroke start and swim backstroke; the second shall swim breaststroke; the third, butterfly; and the fourth shall swim any stroke other than backstroke, breaststroke or butterfly. Each swimmer shall adhere to the position, stroke, kick, turn and finish rules governing the stroke being swum.

##### **ART. 2 . . . FREESTYLE RELAY**

The freestyle relay is swim by a team of four competitors, each swimming one quarter of the required distance of the race in any style, adhering to the turn and finish rules of the freestyle event. The first swimmer of the relay team must use the forward start.

**NOTE:** *The all age relay shall be swum under the same rules as the freestyle relay except each swimmer shall swim one sixth of the total distance.*

**ART. 3 . . .** The first swimmer of a relay team, once called to “step up” or “step in” by the referee, shall not change his/her swimming order in the relay event with any teammate.

**ART. 4 . . .** On the take off, the second, third and fourth swimmers on a relay team may be in motion before the previous swimmer finishes. The swimmer shall remain in contact with the starting platform/pool deck until the previous swimmer has finished. However, moving from the back of the starting platform to the front is permitted provided the swimmer is on the starting platform and does not initiate the action from the pool deck.

**NOTE:** *On starts from the deck, the second, third and fourth swimmers must use the forward start with at least one foot at the edge of the deck. The body may be in motion but no intentional movement of the feet is permitted.*

**ART. 5 . . .** The first three swimmers of a relay team must contact the finish end at the conclusion of his or her leg of the relay. The final swimmer is required to contact the finish pad(when automatic timing is used) or finish end by any part of the body.

**ART. 6 . . .** The first three members of relay teams shall leave the water by the finish end of their lane promptly after finishing their quarter of the race.

#### **PENALTIES FOR RELAY VIOLATIONS:**

1. For a violation by an individual member of the relay team, the relay team is disqualified from the event.
2. For a nonparticipating team member entering the water during the race, the team(s) is disqualified from the event and that individual is disqualified from further competition.