

Swim Stroke Techniques

FREESTYLE—Technique Tips

- Swimmers should breathe to the side rather than straight in front.
- Swimmers use a flutter kick.
- The elbows should bend as the arms come out of the water, then the hands should reach forward, shoulders rotating but not crossing the midline of the body.

Common Disqualifications

- Unless the swimmer touches the bottom of the pool or pulls on the lane ropes, it is hard to get DQ'd while swimming freestyle.

BACKSTROKE—Technique Tips

- Swimmers use a flutter kick
- If the swimmers have trouble staying on top of the water, they should point their chins toward the sky.
- During the pull, the thumbs should lead when the arms come out of the water, then the shoulders rotate so that the pinkies enter the water first.

Common Disqualifications

- Swimmers rolling onto their sides or front before touching the wall during their finish. Swimmers must remain on their back until they finish.

BREASTROKE—Technique Tips

- The proper cycle of the stroke is pull-breath-kick-glide.
- The feet should come up, out, around and together, with no flutter kicks added in.
- When the swimmers glide, they should be in streamline.
- Swimmers are allowed one underwater pull and kick off of each wall.

Common Disqualifications

- One-hand touches at the finish: swimmers must touch the wall with two hands.
- Arms pulling too far towards the swimmers' hips.
- Illegal kicks such as adding flutter kicks in between breaststroke kicks, scissors kicking (in which one leg and foot are turning in towards the body and not coming out, around, and together), or failing to flex and turn out the feet during the kick.
- Underwater recovery, where the swimmers take an extra "mini pull" during their one primary pull.
- Not following the cycle of pull-breathe-kick-glide; each individual pull must be followed by one kick.

BUTTERFLY—Technique Tips

- Swimmers use the dolphin kick, where knees and ankles stay together and the hips move up and down to propel the swimmer through the water.
- There should be two kicks per pull; the cycle of the stroke is kick-pull-kick, kick-pull-kick. A common mistake is to take only one pull per kick.

Common Disqualifications:

- One-hand touches; as with breaststroke, swimmers must finish with a two-hand touch.
- Mixing flutter or breaststroke kicks with the dolphin kick.
- Having an alternating kick, which means that one foot moves up and down in relation to the other foot (kind of like a slow flutter kick).
- Non-simultaneous arms, where the swimmers two arms do not come out of the water and forward at the same time; arms must e simultaneous.
- Underwater recovery with the arms, where swimmers take an extra "mini pull" while their arms are under the water.

For more information look at the American Red Cross's book Swimming and Diving or you can access the USA Swimming website at:

http://www.usa-swimming.org/programs/officials/02_USASwimmingRulesReg.pdf