

Stroke and Turn: From Start to Finish

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Before the Meet

- Read the meet information.
- Several days or a week ahead before the first day of the meet contact the meet referee or your team's official's coordinator to indicate which sessions you plan to work.
 - If you are a trainee, share the number of your next training session.
 - If you decide at the last minute, you can work a session; show up, the referee will almost always be thankful for more help on deck.

Day of the Meet

- Find hospitality and check in 15 minutes prior to the officials' meeting.
- Uniform is White shirt tucked in, black shoes and socks, black shorts, pants, or skirt. Long pants or skirt for finals.
- If outside the Meet Referee will generally allow some flexibility, bring appropriate gear.
 - Sunny day – hat, sunscreen.
 - Bad weather – Rain jacket, hat, gloves, heavy coat.
- Bring 2 ballpoint pens – 1 could end up at the bottom of the pool or run out of ink.
- Follow the Stroke Briefing with the Stroke Briefing document and keep this with you on deck to help learn "rulebook language".
- Take notes on rotation provided during the officials meeting.
- Ask questions if you have any doubts.

Protocols and Jurisdiction

Protocols and Jurisdiction will vary slightly by the level of the meet and the preferences of the Meet Referee.

Jurisdiction

Short Course

- Stroke and Turn Judges - Jurisdiction will generally be half of the pool and 2-4 lanes.

Long Course

- Stroke Judges – End to end, half of the lanes of the pool. E.G 1-4 or 5-8 in an 8-lane pool
- Turn Judges – Flags in to heads up. You will generally cover 2-4 lanes of jurisdiction.

Backstroke Start

- Championship Protocol

- At the first long whistle step to the edge of the pool (make sure to yield to the swimmers in your lanes).
- When the second long whistle sounds look down and check that your swimmers' toes are not wrapped over the gutter or side of the pool.
 - If they are wrapped over the gutter, quietly and succinctly ask the swimmer to check their toes.
 - If using backstroke ledges, at least one toe from each foot must be in contact with the wall.
- When your swimmers' toes are in the correct position raise your head and look forward. (this indicates to the starter and deck referee that your swimmers are in the correct position)
- After the "Take your marks" command jurisdiction for the toes has not been transferred to the stroke and turn official, at this time look down at the swimmers' toes.
- If the toes have moved up to wrap over the gutter or wall, or they move up after the start signal has been given raise your hand to signify an infraction. Do not raise your hand before the starting signal has been given.
- Wrapping for the Backstroke Start
 - If your jurisdiction includes either of the outside lanes at the start end you will "wrap for the start".
 - Move to the side to look straight down the end wall of the pool.
 - Your jurisdiction will start when the starting signal is given.
 - If a swimmer moves to wrap their toes over the gutter or end of the pool after the starting signal raise your hand and write up a disqualification slip.
 - If the swimmer's toes were already over the gutter or end of the pool with the starting signal is given that is the Starter's jurisdiction and the swimmer is not disqualified.
 - After the start, watch until swimmers leave your jurisdiction, then return to the lanes to watch the turns and/or finish.

Empty Lanes or Uneven Numbers of Lanes

"...fair and equitable conditions... no swimmer has an unfair advantage..."

- You must provide equal observation time for each swimmer over the course of a session.
- If you have an empty lane in your jurisdiction allocate the same amount of time to that empty lane. Do not focus more time on the swimmer(s) in your jurisdiction.
- You may have jurisdiction over less lanes than jurisdiction. E.g. in an 8-lane pool the jurisdiction may be lanes 1-3, lanes 4-5, lanes 6-8. If you have jurisdiction over lanes 4-5 you must allocate 1 third of your time to another lane. Observe lane 3 or 6, but do not raise your hand if you see an infraction in one of those lanes.

Freestyle

- “Go to Corners” – The most common infraction during freestyle is missing the wall at the turn. The best position to view the touch is from the corner looking across the pool.
- For freestyle events 500 yards or longer you may be provided a chair. Be sure to stand for the start and wait until the swimmer passes your position during their first lap. Turn end that is after the first turn, and they leave your jurisdiction. Start end wait until they turn, complete their first lap, and leave your jurisdiction on their second lap.

In Lane Observation

- Turn judges will be placed between lanes to observe swims. The positions at the start end are limited by the blocks, diving boards, etc. The turn end should mirror the start end judge’s position; do not stand over the center of a lane.

Protocols

Championship meets will have a more detailed “dance”.

Start End - Stroke and Turn or Turn Judge

- At the start stand between the timers’ chairs so you do not block their view of the starter box strobe.
- After the starting signal is giving step up to the pool and observe the swimmers leave your jurisdiction, then take a couple of steps back.
- Backstroke - see Backstroke Protocol and Jurisdiction above.
- Step back up to the edge of the pool before the first swimmer returns to your jurisdiction. Be in position to look straight down the wall to see touches.
- Freestyle finish (IM and Medley relay included) stay back behind the blocks and continue watching your jurisdiction for infractions. This keeps the finish area less cluttered. You do not need to see the finishing touch; the timers will see the finish.

Turn End – Turn Judge

- Stand back for the start, step up to the edge of the pool before the first swimmer enters your jurisdiction. Be in position to look straight down the wall to see touches.

Stroke Judge

- Single Stroke judge – follow the last swimmer keeping slightly behind so your vision allows you to observe the swimmers and not walk into “deck furniture”.
- Lead-Lag Stroke Judges

- Lead Judge— Start at the 15 meter mark, follow the lead swimmer in your jurisdiction, walking down to the flags. You now become the lag judge. Wait for the last swimmer and follow them down the pool stopping at the 15 meter mark. Repeat for longer events.
- Lag Judge – Start at the flags, follow the last swimmer in your jurisdiction, walking down to the 15 meter mark. You now become the lead judge. Wait for the lead swimmer and follow them down to the flags. Repeat for longer events.
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Relay Exchanges

- Relay exchanges are dual confirmation. Do not raise your hand if you observe an early take off.
- Inside-out, outside-in
 - Inside-out --- (8 lane pool) Stationed between lanes 4 and 5 and looking out towards the edge of the pool. Observing relay take offs in lanes 1-4 or 5-8.
 - Outside-in --- (8 lane pool) Stand at the corner and observe half the pool. Lanes 1-4 or lanes 5-8
- Across the pool
 - Stand on one corner and observe all lanes of the pool.
- Comparing calls
 - With Chief Judges (CJ's) hand them your relay exchange sheet.
 - Without CJ's compare your exchange sheet with your counterpart at the agreed time, either after each heat or at the end of the event.
- Toes to Nose
 - Watch the toes of the swimmer on the blocks. When their feet leave the blocks, scan down to the wall, if the incoming swimmer has not touched the wall it is an early take off. Mark and "X" on that exchange. The time it takes to scan down the wall builds in some benefit of the doubt that always goes to the swimmer.

Reporting an Infraction

- After observing an infraction raise your hand confidently and keep it up long enough to alert coaches and the DR a call may be coming.
- If you raise your hand, you do not need to write a disqualification slip if you decide it was not an infraction. If you do not raise your hand you cannot write up a disqualification slip if you later determine there was an infraction.
- Make a note of the infraction on your heat sheet. Hint: use the infraction code on the DQ slip for a quick way to note the call on your heat sheet.
- The DQ slip is supposed to convey to the referee then the coach what caused the infraction. If it isn't clear, a referee or chief judge may have a question about a call you made. They just need more information, they are not challenging your call.

Rules and Interpretation and How to Write the Call

Backstroke Turn

- Backstroke Turn is the call with the most gray area. The swimmer MAY turn towards the breast, and MAY take a single arm or double arm simultaneous pull, and then must initiate a turn and turn in any manner desired before leaving the wall on the back.
 - Think of the turn as a 3 step process, which can be interrupted at any time by the wall for a legal turn, if at any time there is a break in the steps it is a delay initiating turn or arm pull. A delay will look may look like “a kicking log” without movement of the arms or torso.
 - 1 - Turn towards the breast
 - 2 - A single or simultaneous 2 arm pull – watch the hand(s) until they reach the legs.
 - 3 – Initiate the turn – this can in many ways including:
 - The head looking up to spot the wall
 - The chin tucking down to the chest.
 - Bending at the waist.

Backstroke Finish

- After the swimmer's head passes the flags immediately prior to the finish they may submerge. If a swimmer resurfaces and takes 1 or more strokes, the submerge was not immediately prior to the finish.
 - Write it up as resubmerge during the swim.
- The swimmer must finish towards the back. Swimmers may turn towards the breast and reach for the wall.
 - Write this up as past vertical towards the breast at the finish.
- On the transition turn from the backstroke to the breaststroke in the I.M. the swimmers does a legal backstroke turn and begins the breaststroke. The swimmer must finish the backstroke leg on their back.
 - Write this up as past vertical towards the breast at the finish. Add the code to the I.M. stroke infraction towards the bottom of the disqualification slip.

Freestyle during a medley event.

- Leaving the wall at each turn the swimmer must be turned towards the breast before any propulsive action. I.e. kick or arm pull. Propulsion while on the back is considered back stroke.
 - Write this up as more than one quarter backstroke or >1/4 backstroke

- If a swimmer turns on their back to breath during the freestyle portion of the medley it is considered backstroke. This is common with young swimmers when they get tired.
 - Write this up as more than one quarter backstroke or >1/4 backstroke

Training – hints for trainers and trainees

- The benefit of the doubt always goes to the swimmer.
- See what you call, call what you see.
- As a trainer when you've been assigned a trainee have a conversation with them. Determine where they are in their training. Ask them: What are you hoping to learn/work on during this session?
- When you see an infraction, raise your hand for an uncomfortably long period of time, and then a little longer. While your hand is up, play the infraction over in your mind and try to talk yourself out of the call. If by the time you put your hand down, you have not talked yourself out of the call, write up the disqualification slip.
- Continue to observe other lanes while your hand is up for an infraction.
- To make a no touch call at the end of a length you do not have to see the swimmer touch the wall, you have to see the swimmer NOT touch the wall.
- If the trainee is advanced and ready to be "Out Front", they can raise their hand. Make sure to the discussion prior letting them know they will be raising their hand. Only one person should raise their hand. There should never be a situation where the trainee and the trainer both have their hands raised. Unless it is a safety issue, then raise both hands to get the attention of the DR and the lifeguards.
- Attempt to use positive language when providing correction of behavior. E.g. That was a good call, next time show a little more confidence in raising your hand high.
- Unless the issue is compromising the "fair to all swimmers" axiom, don't continually provide advice on every little issue.
- As a trainer you should also strive to be better. Ask your trainee what worked and what you could change as a trainer the next time to provide a better experience.