STROKE BRIEFING

BREASTSTROKE

Start: Forward start.

Stroke: The swimmer must remain on the breast. The cycle is one arm pull, and one leg kick in that order. The arm pull cannot bring the hands past the hipline, except for the first arm pull after the start and after each turn. The recovery of the hands can be on, under or above the water. The elbows must remain under water except for the last stroke before the turn or finish. All arm movements must be simultaneous. The head must break the surface by the widest point of the second stroke and must break the surface during each complete cycle.

Kick: Breaststroke kick - The feet must be turned out during the propulsive part of the kick and all leg movements must be simultaneous. No alternating, scissors or butterfly kick is allowed, except after the start and after each turn, a single butterfly kick is permitted prior to the first breaststroke kick.

Turns/Finish After each turn, the swimmer must be on the breast when the feet leave the wall. The touch must be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. The last stroke before the turn or at the finish may be an arm stroke only. The head may be submerged after the last arm pull prior to the touch, but it must break the surface at some point during the last complete or incomplete stroke cycle preceding the touch.

BUTTERFLY

Start: Forward start.

Stroke: The swimmer must remain on the breast. Multiple kicks are permitted, but the first arm pull must bring the swimmer to the surface. The arms (shoulder to wrist) must be brought forward over the water and pulled back under the water. All arm movements must be simultaneous. Throughout the race, some part of the body must break the surface, except for the start and after each turn, where the swimmer may be submerged for not more than 15 meters. At that point, the head must break the surface.

Kick: Butterfly kick - All leg movements must be simultaneous up and down. No alternating, scissors, or breaststroke kick is allowed.

Turns/Finish After each turn, the swimmer must be on the breast when the feet leave the wall. After the head has passed the backstroke flags (5yd SCY or 5m LCM), the swimmer may be completely submerged while reaching for the finish. The touch must be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.

BACKSTROKE

Start: Backward start.

In the water, facing the start end with both hands on the gutter or on the starting grips. Foot placement will vary as follows:

A: In a guttered pool - the feet may be above the water. Before or after the start, they must not be in or on the gutter, and they cannot be above or curled over the lip. If there are backstroke ledges, at least one toe from each foot must be in contact with the wall.
B: In a pool with full-length wall pads, the feet may be above the water level. If there are backstroke ledges, at least one toe from each foot must be in contact with the wall.

Stroke/Kick The swimmer must remain on the back. Any stroke or kick may be used. Throughout the race, some part of the body must break the surface, except for the start and after each turn, where the swimmer may be submerged for not more than 15 meters. At that point, the head must break the surface.

Turns: During the turn, the swimmer may rotate toward the breast and may use a continuous single or continuous simultaneous double arm pull to initiate the turn. The initiation of the turn does not need to be immediate. Some part of the swimmer must touch the wall at the completion of each length, and the swimmer must be on the back when the feet leave the wall.

Finish: After the head has passed the backstroke flags (5yd SCY or 5m LCM), the swimmer may be completely submerged while reaching for the finish. The touch can be made with any part of the body, and the swimmer must be on the back.

FREESTYLE

Start: Forward start.

Stroke/Kick Any stroke or kick may be used. Throughout the race, some part of the body must break the surface, except for at the start and after each turn, where the swimmer may be submerged for not more than 15 meters. At that point, the head must break the surface.

Turns/Finish At the completion of each length, the touch can be made with any part of the body. After the head has passed the backstroke flags (5yd SCY or 5m LCM), the swimmer may be completely submerged while reaching for the finish. The touch can be made with any part of the body.

INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

Start: Forward start.

Stroke: The swimmer must swim all four strokes in this order: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle. The rules for each stroke apply. During the freestyle leg, the swimmer cannot swim in the style of the previous three strokes and the swimmer must remain on the breast.

Kick: The rules for each stroke apply.

Turns/Finish Intermediate turns must follow the turn rules for each stroke. During freestyle turns, the swimmer may rotate past vertical toward the back, but must return to the breast prior to any kick or stroke. Transition turns between strokes must follow finish and start rules for each stroke.

RELAYS Relay Takeoffs: The next swimmer's feet (foot) must remain in contact with the starting platform until the finishing swimmer has touched the wall or pad. Taking off from the adjustable wedge alone is not allowed. When starting from the deck, swimmers 2, 3, and 4 must start with one foot, stationary, at the pool's edge.

FREESTYLE RELAY The rules for Freestyle stroke apply. Each swimmer must swim one-fourth of the event distance.

MEDLEY RELAY Each team must swim all four strokes in this order: Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, and Freestyle. The rules for each stroke apply. Each swimmer must swim one-fourth of the event distance. During the freestyle leg, the swimmer cannot swim in the style of the previous three strokes, and except for turns, the swimmer must remain on the breast. During the turns, the swimmer may rotate past vertical toward the back but must return to the breast prior to any kick or stroke.

Stroke briefings are an overview of the rule book, not a replacement.

Read and know the rules.