

FINA DVD OVERVIEW for October 2013 RULES

The DVD "Officiating Swimming" FINA 2005-2009 covers the Rules of Swimming including strokes, the underwater part of starts, turns, relay changeovers and finishes.

It does not cover starts, particularly false starts, and Rule SW 10 The Race.

SW 10.3 requires swimmers to remain in the lane they started in throughout the race.

The Butterfly segment differs from Masters Rules in that it says a breaststroke kick cannot be used in Butterfly. A breaststroke kick is allowed in Butterfly in all Masters events. FINA now restrict swimmers to one breaststroke kick per arm pull, as does MSA although, for historical reasons, MSA allows two breaststroke kicks per arm pull for Butterfly events of 400m or longer (but not in the butterfly segment of IM events).

The arms must be brought forward over the water. MSA interprets this as the arm action is legal as long as the elbows are visible on top of the water. The rules now say that the arms must be brought backward under the water but you are unlikely to ever see any backward movement above the water because they would have no forward propulsion. For the touch at each turn and the finish, the hands must now be separated as well as simultaneous.

The Backstroke section does not cover turns other than the tumble or flip turn. One turn, often used in Masters, that is not covered is the *"twist to the tummy and grab the wall with one or two hands then push off on the back"* turn. This is legal but never seen in televised elite swimming events. The backstroke turn rule is now quite specific that, once past the vertical, the armstroke must be immediate as well as continuous.

In Breaststroke please note that the butterfly kick allowed at the start and at turns must be done during the first arm stroke. For the touch at each turn and the finish, the hands must now be separated as well as simultaneous.

In Relays it states:

- Watch the feet of the swimmer taking off from the block and when the feet lose contact with the block check that the incoming swimmer has touched. Note that, unlike the start, the 2nd and subsequent relay team members can be moving as long as their feet are in contact with the block or end wall.

In medley relays it is equally important to ensure the incoming swimmer touches in accordance with the Rules.

The key points the DVD emphasises several times are:

- **The swimmer always gets the benefit of the doubt.** (If you thought you saw something then you didn't. You must be certain). MSA fully endorses this.
- Judges of Stroke should stand at the 15m mark for the start so that they can observe that swimmers have surfaced by that mark. After that they should walk and observe from behind the slowest swimmer. It is difficult to see what is being done side on.

MSA supports this but notes that walking behind may not be practical when the field is widely spread.

- If a Freestyle swimmer misses their turn they may go back to the wall and touch without disqualification. Note that a swimmer in a Relay team who starts before the incoming swimmer touches shall be disqualified. They cannot return to the wall and start again.