USMS OFFICIALS' BRIEFING

BREASTSTROKE

Start:	Forward start from the blocks, pool deck or in the water. Facing course or start end for in-the-water Starts allowed provided shoulders at or past vertical toward breast when feet leave wall.
Stroke	• Body kept on breast (shoulders at or past vertical towards the breast). Not permitted to roll onto the back at any time except at the turn. • Stroke cycle is one pull and one kick in that order. Simultaneous arm movement in same horizontal plane. • After start and each turn one stroke may be completely back to legs. Head must break surface at widest part of second pull. • Recovery by the hands from the breast on, under, or over the water. Elbows under water except last stroke before turn or finish. • During each complete cycle, some part of head shall break the surface of the water.
Kick:	• After start and each turn, prior to the first breaststroke kick, a single butterfly kick is permitted. Movement of the legs shall be simultaneous vertically and horizontally. • Feet turned out during propulsive part of kick. • No alternating, scissors, or butterfly kick, except as stated, is allowed.
Turns / Finish	• May turn in any manner as long as body is on the breast before any stroke or kick after leaving the wall. • Touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. At the last stroke before the turn and at the finish a stroke not followed by a kick is permitted. Head may be submerged after the last pull prior to the touch, provided it breaks the surface of the water at some point during last complete or incomplete stroke cycle preceding the touch.

BUTTERFLY

Start:	Forward start from the blocks, pool deck or in the water. Facing course or start end for in-the-water Starts allowed provided shoulders at or past vertical toward breast when feet leave wall.
Stroke:	• Body kept on breast (shoulders at or past vertical towards the breast). • Multiple butterfly kicks permitted but first pull must bring swimmer to the surface. • Some part of the swimmer must break surface throughout the race except swimmer may be submerged after start and each turn not more than 15 meters where head must break surface. • Arms, shoulder to wrist, brought forward over water and pulled back simultaneously.
Kick:	• Simultaneous up and down movement. • No alternating or scissors kicking movements. • Breaststroke kick may be used exclusively or interchangeably with the dolphin kick at any time during the race. Only one breaststroke kick is permitted per arm pull, except that a single breaststroke kick is permitted prior to the turn and the finish without an arm pull. After the start and after each turn, a single breaststroke kick is permitted prior to the first arm pull. There's no limit to the number of dolphin kicks per arm pull. • A scissors kicking movement is not permitted.
Turns / Finish:	• Shoulders at or past vertical toward breast when the swimmer leaves wall. • Touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. • After the head has passed the flags (5 meter/yard mark) immediately prior to reaching for the finish, the swimmer may be completely submerged prior to the touch.

BACKSTROKE

Start:	• In water facing start end with both hands on gutter or starting grips. • Guttered pool - feet/toes may be above the water, but may not be in, on, above lip, or bent over the gutter at any time before or after start. • Flat wall pads - feet/toes may be placed above the water level but not curled over the top of the wall. • Backstroke ledges – one toe from each foot must be in contact with the wall.
Stroke / Kick:	• Any style as long as swimmer remains on back (shoulders at or past vertical towards the back). Some part of the swimmer must break surface throughout the race except swimmer may be submerged after start and each turn not more than 15 meters where head must break surface. • Elementary backstroke is common.

Turns:	• During turn swimmer may go past vertical to the breast and may utilize a continuous single or continuous simultaneous double arm pull to initiate the turn. • Open turns (grabbing the wall with hands as part of the continuous turning motion) are common. • Some part of swimmer must touch wall at completion of each length. Shoulders at or past vertical toward back when feet leave wall.
Finish:	• Some part of swimmer must touch the wall while on the back. • After the head has passed the flags (5 meter/yard mark) immediately prior to reaching for the finish, the swimmer may be completely submerged prior to the touch.

FREESTYLE

Start:	• Forward start or the Backstroke start may be used.
Stroke / Kick:	• Any style may be used. • Some part of the swimmer must break surface throughout the race except swimmer may be submerged after start and each turn not more than 15 meters where head must break surface.
Turns / Finish:	• Some part of swimmer must touch the wall at completion of each length or required distance. • After the head has passed the flags (5 meter/yard mark) immediately prior to reaching for the finish, the swimmer may be completely submerged prior to the touch.

INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

Start:	Forward start on the blocks, pool deck or in the water. Facing course wall or start end for in-the-water Starts allowed provided shoulders at or past vertical toward breast when feet leave wall.
Stroke:	• Rules for each stroke apply. • Must swim ¼ of event distance as prescribed stroke, in order of Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle. • May not swim in the style of the other three strokes during the freestyle leg. During freestyle leg, swimmer must be on the breast (shoulders at or past vertical towards the breast) except when executing a turn.
Kick:	Rules for each stroke apply.
Turns:	Intermediate turns conform to turn rules for the stroke. During freestyle to freestyle turn, swimmer must return to breast (shoulders at or past vertical towards the breast) prior to any kick or stroke.
Finish:	Transition turns conform to finish rules for the stroke being finished and start rules for the stroke being started. During breaststroke to freestyle turn, swimmer must return to breast (shoulders at or past vertical towards the breast) prior to any kick or stroke. Some part of swimmer must touch the wall at completion of each length or required distance.

RELAYS

FREESTYLE RELAY	• Freestyle rules apply. • Each swimmer must swim ¼ of distance.
MEDLEY RELAY	• Rules pertaining to each stroke apply. • Each swimmer must swim ¼ of event distance as prescribed stroke, in order of Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Freestyle. • May not swim in the style of the other three strokes during the freestyle leg. During freestyle leg, swimmer must be on the breast (shoulders at or past vertical towards the breast) except when executing a turn. Swimmer must return to breast (shoulders at or past vertical towards the breast) prior to any kick or stroke.
TAKEOFFS:	Swimmers feet/foot must remain in contact with the starting platform until the incoming swimmer has touched the finish wall or pad.

JURISDICTION

Stroke Judge:	Wall to wall - start to finish.
Turn Judge:	• Start - From entry into water through completion of first arm stroke or “heads up”. • Turn - Last stroke and kick prior to touch and through first arm stroke after the turn. Finish - Ensure completion conforms to finish rules.

BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT GOES TO THE SWIMMER

Call what you see…and see what you call