

IMMEDIATE CHANGES TO CONFORM TO WORLD AQUATICS AND USA SWIMMING RULES

World Aquatics approved an amendment to the rules of competition, effective on February 21, 2023. Pursuant to article 601.4.4, changes adopted by World Aquatics shall automatically be adopted unless the USMS Rules Committee takes action to alter the amendments for clarity, consistency of language, or stylistic conformity with USMS rules. Amendments can be rejected by a nine-tenths vote of the Rules Committee and a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

The USMS Rules Committee voted to affirm this change via an email vote on March 12th, 2023 and it has been adopted in the 2023 USMS Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition.

Explanation of Change

World Aquatics approved a change which alters the requirements for judging the finish in backstroke races, to include the first leg of the medley relay.

1. There is no longer a requirement for the swimmer to have some part of the body above the water when finishing.
2. The swimmer must still finish on the back.

The complete text of the change is included on the next page of this notice. There are no other changes to the backstroke rules, including the backstroke start.

The most up-to-date version of the rule book can be found online at usms.org/rules

Please direct all questions to the USMS Rules Committee Chair.

Mollie Grover
USMS Rules Committee Chair
March 14, 2023

Change

This change was accomplished by adding a sentence to article 101.4.2 Stroke. The rule now reads (in its entirety):

Standing in or on the gutter, placing the toes above the lip of the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter immediately after the start is not permitted. The swimmer shall push off on the back and continue swimming on the back throughout the race. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface of the water. **Once some part of the head of the swimmer has passed the 5 meter mark (long course and short course meters) or 5 yard mark (short course yards) immediately prior to reaching the finish, the swimmer may be completely submerged prior to the touch.**

(Bold language was added.)